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ARAB TIMES

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Is that a genie? Argentine contortionist Hugo Zamoratta demonstrates the art of 'enterology' (left) on a London sidewalk. Zamoratta, who is 5ft 9in. tall (1.75m), squeezes his body into a bottle 26 in. (66 cm) high and 18 in. (45 cm) in diameter. His body-bending feats will be a feature of a Christmas circus opening in London on Dec 23. (Reuter wirephoto)



Two refugees shout and cry before police arrive to repatriate them. (Reuter wirephoto)

Israel has set up base in Red Sea

New threat to Arabs: Ethiopian complicity

MANAMA, Dec 12, (AP): Sudanese leader Lt Gen Omar Al Bashir says Israel has set up a military base on Ethiopian islands in the strategic Bab Al Mandab Straits 1,300 miles (2,050 km) away from the Jewish state.

Bashir, who arrived in Bahrain today to a red carpet treatment, made the claim about the alleged Red Sea base during a news conference in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

It was the first time the Sudanese leader has publicly mentioned the island, Dhalak, is off the Ethiopian coast 280 miles (450 km) north of the Bab Al Mandab Straits, which joins the Red Sea to Gulf of Aden, the Sunday Times said up to 200 Israeli soldiers and technicians are in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, training Ethiopian officers and repairing military hardware.

Under the deal, Addis Ababa would allow 22,000 Ethiopian Jews to leave for Israel, the newspaper reported. In exchange, Israel would provide military experts to help Ethiopia end a rebellion in the northern province of Eritrea.

According to another report, in this week's Sunday Times of London, a runway and a listening station are to be built for Israeli use on another Ethiopian island in the Red Sea.

The report, which quoted unspecified Western diplomatic sources, said Israel had agreed to supply weapons to Ethiopia in a swap for Ethiopian Jews, known as Falashas.

The newspaper said Israel has offered arms including ammunition and spare parts for Soviet weaponry that Israel has captured from its Arab neighbours.

Moscow has been the main backer of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam in his long-running civil war with secessionist guerrillas.

Soviet military help now is being scaled down, however. The Sunday Times reported that all Soviet military advisers were expected to be out of Ethiopia's war zone by Christmas.

purported Israeli move, which was reported last month in Sudanese newspapers.

"This Israeli presence is threatening all Arab states off the Red Sea, and the Gulf countries," Bashir said at the news conference.

There was no comment from Ethiopian officials on the claim. Bashir gave no details, but on Nov 17, the Khartoum newspaper Al Engaz Al Watani reported that as part of a deal in which Ethiopia restored relations with Israel, Ethiopia would provide military and maritime facilities on the islands of Sali and Khaja in the straits.

Refugees repatriated from Hong Kong



A young refugee protests through a speaker-phone. (Reuter wirephoto)



An officer escorts a small Vietnamese boy out of Phoenix House. (Reuter wirephoto)

New Aids law soon

THE new Aids law to be issued very shortly, provides punishments including jail terms to a maximum of seven years and a fine not exceeding KD7,000 on all persons or carriers intentionally infecting others, Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, planning minister and acting minister of health, announced yesterday.

The law which falls under article 18, is still to be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. However, on approval it also empowers the authorities to isolate Aids patients or those suspected to be patients in accordance with a decision from the medical commission.

The new Aids law, the first of its kind ever to be issued in Kuwait, requires all couples planning to get married to undergo an Aids test and submit a certificate stating that he/she is free from Aids.

The law, when promulgated, will authorize the Ministry of Health to apply the Aids test on foreigners coming to Kuwait with the express aim of extended stays in the country.

The law will ban all doctors in Kuwait from divulging information of their Aids patients, except for meeting some international or bilateral agreements in cases specifically directed by the law.

(See Page 9)

Release imminent

Srinagar, Dec 12, (Agencies): The government today said the release of a cabinet minister's daughter was imminent, although the woman's abductors rejected the offer of a proposed exchange-for-jailed-Muslims.

The talks have reached a crucial stage and are close to a solution, Chief Secretary Moosa Raza of Jammu-Kashmir state told reporters.

Despite "some interruptions," negotiators for the government and the Muslim fundamentalist kidnappers continued to meet on the fifth day of the abduction, said Raza.

In an interview today with UPI in the Pakistan city of Rawalpindi, Kashmir Liberation Front leader Amanullah Khan charged Indian officials were drawing out the talks as part of a plan to learn the secret structure of his organization and then move against it.

India was using "delaying tactics to gain time and harm our people underground," said Khan.

"They have been saying since yesterday that the boys would be released. My conclusion is that they are trying to gain time," said Khan. "If they don't release the boys, the girl will be killed."

Rubia Sayeed, a 22-year-old medical student, was kidnapped on Friday at gunpoint in Srinagar, the summer capital of the state and a popular tourist resort.

The separatist, Kashmiri Liberation Front claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, triggering the first crisis for the 10-day-old government of Prime Minister V.P. Singh.

Rubia, the youngest daughter of Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, is believed to be held hostage at an undisclosed place in Srinagar. Negotiations for her release also are being held in this city.

"We have made a new offer to the militants and we are hopeful that they will agree," Raza said, without elaborating.

The militants had agreed earlier today to free Rubia, but the release was delayed by disagreements over the site for exchanging several front members arrested during the past year for suspected subversion and secession.

After initial haggling, the two sides agreed at midday to make the trade at an isolated site, but the kidnappers later went back

Existing law enough for Bofors

'No special probe'

By M.C. Bose Business editor

INDIAN Prime Minister V.P. Singh has ruled out any special inquiry into the Bofors gun deal saying that the existing law was quite competent to take care of the matter. Singh also discussed this matter with his Principal Secretary B.G. Deshmukh and Cabinet Secretary T.N. Sheshan, according to a reliable official source.

In an interview with BBC TV's Network East programme, the prime minister said his government will not be vindictive in pursuing the charges of corruption against the previous government and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

He said: "We have no right to be revengeful. But at the same time we have no right to compromise the law."

In another development the government has begun to act on the main electoral promises made by the National Front on agriculture.

Senior officials of the Agriculture Ministry have prepared notes on how to implement some of those promises.

The notes were given to the Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Dev Lal yesterday.

The National Front's other promises, which are being examined by the Krishna Bhavan officials, include a proposal for revising the existing laws to bring about an equitable distribution of land and other natural resources and making the tiller the owner of the land.

Meanwhile, the deputy prime minister's office in Krishna Bhavan is being reconstituted. Dr. K.V. Singh, a IAS officer of the Haryana cadre, has already joined. A few more new officers are expected to join during the next week.

Official sources said that the agricultural and rural development schemes introduced by Rajiv government would naturally be given a fresh look. There's, however, no possibility of withdrawing the prime support schemes now in operation, they said.

These schemes include Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and other special programmes to stimulate agricultural production.

A Finance Ministry spokesman told the Arab Times on telephone that Bimal Jalan, India's executive director on IMF in Washington has been appointed as the new finance secretary, replacing Gopal Arora. Jalan was working as the chief economic adviser to Singh while he was the finance minister.

Street battle in Assiut

ASSIUT, Egypt, Dec 12, (AP): Muslim militants and police fought with firearms, sticks and chains in a street battle that left 40 people wounded and at least 300 behind bars, authorities said today.

Assiut's security chief, police Maj. Gen. Mahmoud El Fakharany, said yesterday's battle began when military fundamentalists left a police-besieged mosque and tried to march to the city's centre to demonstrate against the government.

He said 10 policemen and 30 militants were wounded and all the demonstrators were arrested. Many of the injuries were bullet wounds, El Fakharany said.

The streets of Assiut, 238 miles (380 km) south of Cairo, were quiet today.

But yesterday, fearing trouble, police sealed off "about 200 extremists inside the mosque," El Fakharany told the Associated Press. "They had firearms, a dozen incendiary bombs, chains and knives."

Defying the police siege, he said, the militants left the mosque to demonstrate against the Assiut University Student Union's action in allowing mixed-sex parties and excursions that they consider contrary to Islamic teachings.

"They wanted to go into the city centre and their weapons clearly indicated they were bent on sabotage," El Fakharany said.

Boat people return begins

US regrets expulsion

LONDON, Dec 12, (Agencies): Britain strongly defended its enforced repatriation of 51 Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong today and said it would negotiate with Hanoi for the swift return of 40,000 others.

But in response to protests from Amnesty International and opposition politicians, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd promised that further deportations would be suspended for a week.

He said the government would send two observers to Vietnam in January to monitor the fate of the first group sent back whose safety had been guaranteed by the communist authorities.

Hurd and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher brushed aside claims that the refugees were sent back to poverty and accused the international community of refusing to help solve the crisis in Hong Kong.

The forcible repatriation of Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong is "perfectly in order" and countries which object should offer them a home, Thatcher said.

"It is not possible for the people of Hong Kong to take more and more of these Vietnamese boat people, many of whom were

Special Report Love lost

Part 3

- Kuwait government action to control Kuwait-Egyptian marriages
- US Senator Dixon introduces legislation to deter parental child abduction
- View from a psychologist
- A child's story

Pages 12 & 13

NEWSWATCH

Kuwait pleased
KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Reuter): Kuwait expressed satisfaction today at warming ties between Egypt and Syria and said a summit between the two countries would help solve many Arab problems.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah told reporters: "We are very pleased with the steps taken by the two fraternal countries towards restoring full normal relations."

He was referring to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's telephone conversation with Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad which resulted in agreement to resume air links between Cairo and Damascus. (See Page 11)

Pakistan violence
KARACHI, Dec 12, (Reuter): Paramilitary forces were ordered into the southern Pakistani city of Hyderabad today to curb ethnic violence in which one man was killed.

Police said a scooter driver was shot dead, sparking disturbances between native Sindhis and Mohajir immigrants from India.

Red rule defied
BELGRADE, Dec 12, (AP): Two independent opposition parties announced their formation in Serbia today, defying hard-line communist policies in the largest Yugoslav republic.

Philippines revamps army after coup bid; gunmen attack police car killing two

MANILA, Dec 12, (Agencies): Gunmen opened fire at a car carrying a top Filipino police officer outside the US-run Clark Air Base today killing two of his bodyguards but leaving him unhurt, police said.

In the northern province of Cagayan, 250 miles (400 km) from Manila, communist rebels ambushed a military jeep on Sunday killing six soldiers, including two officers, the military said today.

Police said Lt Col Rolando Cinco, deputy police chief in Pangasinan province, was riding in his car when the gunmen opened fire at them in Angeles City, 50 miles (80 km) north of Manila, outside

Clark. Cinco and his driver escaped unhurt in the attack at 3 am, but two of his police bodyguards were killed. The charred bodies of the two were found in the wreckage of the vehicle, which was set ablaze, police said.

It was not clear if his men of the communist New People's Army, who are operating in the area, were involved in the attack, police said.

The Philippines is revamping the army to try to prevent more coup attempts against President Corazon Aquino, sacking a general and an

intelligence chief and scattering mutinous soldiers to units around the country.

Army chief Major-General Manuel Cacanando relieved 14 other officers of command and proposed disbanding the Scout Rangers, an elite unit which contributed many of the troops who tried to topple Aquino in the Dec 1-7 revolt.

Most of the estimated 3,000 mutineers who took part in the sixth and bloodiest revolt against Aquino — in which 119 people were killed and 600 wounded — came from the army.

Cacanando relieved Brigadier-General Marcelo Blando as army division commander and Colonel Cesar Elano as chief of the army intelligence security group.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives and the Senate opened debate today on a proposed bill granting President Corazon Aquino sweeping powers to legislate for six months without approval from Congress to deal with the devastating impact of the worst coup attempt against her.

(Continued on Page 7)

Weather

CLOUDY to partly cloudy weather with light to moderate southeasterly wind.
State of sea: Moderate to rough.
High water: 10:00 am, 1:00 pm
Low water: 6:00 am, 6:00 pm
Source: 6:34 am
Sunset: 5:51 pm
Maximum temperatures recorded:
Kuwait: 20°C 68°F
Abu Dhabi: 19°C 66°F
Doha: 18°C 64°F
Minimum temperatures recorded:
Kuwait: 14°C 57°F
Abu Dhabi: 16°C 61°F
Doha: 15°C 59°F
Windstorm temperatures expected:
Kuwait: 20°C 68°F
Abu Dhabi: 19°C 66°F
Doha: 18°C 64°F
Maximum humidity recorded:
Kuwait: 97 per cent
Abu Dhabi: 94 per cent
Doha: 92 per cent

Lanka studies upsurge of violence

COLOMBO, Dec 12, (Agencies): The government today summoned the National Security Council to investigate the worst upsurge in Sinhalese radical violence of the past three months, a military official said.

The official, said Sinhalese radicals had killed 54 men, women and children, torched 102 vehicles and 13 state-owned buildings, including a library and a rubber factory, since Sunday.

The military official said the National Security Council, the country's top military organisation, was studying intelligence reports to find out what was behind the sud-

den upsurge of violence.

The victims, all Sinhalese, were either shot or hacked to death, the official said.

In addition to the deaths blamed on the radicals, police found 65 bodies of suspected Sinhalese radicals shot and killed by vigilantes in the central and southern parts of Sri Lanka.

Most of the killings occurred in southern Matara district, where 35 people died. The area is 135 kilometres (85 miles) south of Colombo.

Notes left behind indicated the victims were killed because they were suspected of being

either government informants or supporters of the governing United National Party, the official said.

The radical People's Liberation Front started a violent campaign against the government to protest a peace accord signed in 1987 to end a rebellion by Tamil militants.

Sinhalese radicals say the accord gave too many concessions to the Tamils, who make up 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 16 million people.

Tamils say they want their own homeland because they are denied jobs and education by the majority Sinhalese, who account for about 75 per cent of the island's population.

Aquino set to get more powers

MANILA, Dec 12, (Reuter): The Philippine Congress rallied behind President Corason Aquino today, putting the final touches to a law which would give her emergency powers to crush further military coup attempts against her government.

Senator Neptali Gonzales, leader of the country's largest political party and main sponsor of the emergency bill, compared the bloody Dec 1-7 revolt to an "earthquake".

"Thousands of those who participated in the coup, especially the masterminds and plotters, are still unaccounted for," Gonzales told the Senate in a speech urging members to pass the bill swiftly.

"Assassinations of marked officials is a threat we cannot ignore. Hundreds of loose firearms are yet to be collected," he said.

Aquino was unharmed when rebel aircraft bombed the presidential palace in Manila at the start of the coup which Gonzales called "the bloodiest and most destructive rebellion ever waged against the Aquino government."

The official death toll in the coup, the sixth Aquino has faced since she took office amid massive displays of popular support in 1986, was 119 with about 600 injured.

Gonzales said he expected the Senate to pass the bill later today with the House of Representatives adding its endorsement by tomorrow. Aquino aides said she hoped to sign it into law on Friday.

The proposed law would give Aquino the power to order raids on homes and private offices to search for weapons and to take over public utilities and related businesses, fix prices, regulate power supplies and seize hoarded food.

She would also have authority to order the compulsory settlement of labour disputes.

Legislators said the main thrusts of the law were to help rebuild the shattered economy and arm Aquino against any more attempted coups.

"With about 2,000 rebel soldiers still unaccounted for, the threat from the army rebels definitely is still there," said Gonzales of the Democratic Filipino Struggle (LDP) Party.

"There's no contrition on their part. They don't even feel sorry for what they have done. In fact, they feel they are the victors."

Opposition legislators argued against the law, saying it would give Aquino dictatorial powers and further polarise the country. Leftist groups have threatened to challenge the law in the Supreme Court.

Millions lost in coup attempt

Rebels' den raided

MANILA, Dec 12, (AP): Government soldiers today raided the houses of a suspected leader and a suspected sympathizer of last week's coup attempt and seized ammunition and radio equipment, the military reported. The suspects were not in their homes.

Meanwhile, the state-run news agency reported that between 300 million and 500 million pesos (\$14.3 million and \$23.8 million) worth of military equipment was destroyed in the nine-day mutiny.

An officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said raiders seized 150 rounds of M-16 and 50 rounds of Uzi submachine-gun ammunition from the house of former army Maj. Lyle Tugbang near the Manila airport in suburban Paranaque.

Soldiers also found radio equipment and a list of radio frequencies, including those of 32 Metropolitan Manila police stations and the Manila Bulletin, he said.

The military said Tugbang led rebel troops who disarmed air force soldiers guarding Manila's domestic airport in the early hours on Dec 1, the first day of the coup attempt.

The 40 M-16 assault rifles taken by the rebel soldiers from the air force guards have not been recovered, the officer said.

Tugbang also led a rebel band that tried to break through a military blockade on a seaside road near the airport, he added.

Soldiers also raided the house of Cornelio Sangalang, identified only as a former military officer and rebel sympathizer. The military said a van that had been used to transport the missing M-16s was found in garage of Sangalang's home, which also was near the airport.

Tugbang and Sangalang were not at home during the raids. Tugbang's wife told raiders her husband had not come home for about a month.

The Philippines News Agency said military losses in the coup attempt included three World War II vintage T-28 planes and one Sikorsky helicopter gunship used by the rebels to bomb the Malacanang presidential palace and the armed forces headquarters.

One F-5 fighter-bomber was destroyed when it crashed, killing its pilot, Maj. Danilo Atienza, leader of the loyal air force group that destroyed the rebel aircraft.

Japan lifted restrictions on its travellers going to the Philippines, three days after the coup attempt ended in the Philippines, officials said.

Unidentified gunmen ambushed a provincial deputy police superintendent today near the US-run Clark Air Base, wounding the officer and a security aide and killing two bodyguards, police said.



Business as usual

It's business as usual for the British embassy yesterday despite a shattered glass window at its offices in a 19-storey building in the centre of Manila's financial district of Makati. The embassy and building was damaged when government troops flushed out rebel forces occupying rooftops of high-rise buildings in the area. (Reuters wirephoto)

Marcos gang killed his foes

Deaths in Seattle

SEATTLE, (UPI): A Filipino congressman testified in federal court Monday that the 1986 killing of two Seattle union workers were engineered by the intelligence network of the late Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos.

Congressman Bonifacio Gillego testified in US district court in a \$30-million lawsuit against the late Marcos' estate. He said Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were shot to death at a Seattle cannery union hall in June 1981 because of their anti-Marcos activities.

"The Marcos intelligence apparatus in the United States was used to harass, intimidate and conduct acts of physical violence against the anti-Marcos opposition movement for 15 years," Gillego told the court. "The murders of Domingo and Viernes were but one of the more extreme examples of the Marcos intelligence apparatus to silence the movement."

Gillego, who was in Philippine intelligence 20 years until 1960 and later spent five years in hid-

ing from the Marcos regime, said the "disappeared" information on intelligence activities while Marcos was in power.

But lawyer Richard Hibey, representing Imelda Marcos and the estate of her late husband, attempted to discredit Gillego by saying much of the information he gathered after leaving Philippine intelligence was based on hearsay.

Before they were slain, Viernes and Domingo planned to travel to the Philippines to investigate allegations of brutality by the Marcos regime.

Gillego said Marcos' intelligence operatives, under the direction of Philippine Gen Fabian Ver, a Marcos loyalist, routinely used threats and physical violence to silence critics of the regime.

He said many critics of Marcos "disappeared," or were jailed and tortured. Some were killed, Gillego said.

Gillego told the court an intelligence "slush fund" provided \$15,000 "for the murders" of Viernes and Domingo.

Cabinet reshuffle

Benazir in no hurry

ISLAMABAD, Dec 12, (Kuna): Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto today ruled out the possibility of her forming a broad-based government but said she would like to add like-minded opposition members of parliament to her cabinet.

"We are looking for moderate elements," she said while addressing a press conference in the parliament house this afternoon after the National Assembly was adjourned at the end of its first winter session.

Benazir said the main conditions for entry into her cabinet for opposition members was that they should have "democratic credentials" and did not believe in mid-term polls, which she said were not all necessary. "My government has a right to rule for full term of five years," she remarked.

A third condition, according to her, was that the entrant would accept the manifesto of her Pakistan People's Party. In return, she said, the PPP would give due consideration to his views.

Benazir, who according to a press report, was expecting her second child within a week, said she was not in a hurry to reshuffle her cabinet. "The federal cabinet will be reshuffled at an appropriate time and as soon as the majority position of the government stabilised in the parliament," she added.

Moreover, the strength of the cabinet would also be "appropriate," Benazir remarked.

As regards criticism about her enlarged cabinet, she said former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet consisted of 58 ministers while Bangladesh President Hussein Mohammad Ershad's cabinet comprised 48 members.

As compared to them, her cabinet was of lesser ministers, she said without giving their exact number and adding: "I have a right to have a larger cabinet, even up to 100 or 110 to run the affairs of the country."

Premier Benazir categorically denied press reports that she had extended formal invitation to the combined opposition parties alliance in the parliament to join a broad-based government.

On hotly debated issue of her differences with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on the appointment of superior court judges, she said "the two of us have resolved the issue through mutual understanding in our meeting yesterday."

Wataniya Building, Lower level, Salmiya. Opposite the Zahra Complex.

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Bingo Day 13

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Nadia Comaneci affair

Wife's agony

HALLANDALE, Florida, Dec 12. (AP) The wife of the man who helped Olympic gold medalist Nadia Comaneci escape from Romania took to the airwaves yesterday to tell her side of the story. Maria Panait said she was proud when she first learned of the role her husband, Constantin, played in the defection of Comaneci, the gymnast who beguiled crowds at the 1976 Olympics.

Devastated But her pride turned to devastation when Comaneci and Panait appeared together in a news conference to announce they planned to settle down together. She said she has not heard from her husband since the escape. "I didn't sleep for five days, I've lost ten pounds (4 kilograms), it's been very hard," said Mrs Panait, 25. She lives in Hallandale with her four children, who also appeared on television to say they missed their father. Their statements came on a short promotional tape for the "Hard Copy" show, which was aired in its entirety.

Killer offered praise, money

NEW YORK, Dec 12. (AP) The city is on the lookout for another subway killer — but this time people want to give him money and moral support. Even the victim's mother says she won't press charges if the killer turns up. The man they're looking for was riding a train about 5 am, on Saturday when two men started beating and robbing another. According to witnesses, the fourth man said "this is wrong, we're not going to have any more of this."

Then he plunged a knife into assistant Jamal Jones' heart. The other man fled and, when the train pulled into the next station, the survivor walked off the train and into the city. The man has become an instant folk hero to many New Yorkers fed up with subway crime. The case is similar to that of Bernhard Goetz, who in 1984 shot four teen-agers he said he believed were preparing to rob him on a train. The mother of the dead man, May Jones, said in an interview in the daily news that she would not press charges against the man.

A friend of the Jones family, who answered the family's phone yesterday, said Mrs Jones was not granting interviews, but remained firm in her support for the slayer. "Jamal was in the process of saving someone when it happened. Bringing charges against the man would be kind of ludicrous," said Winston Jay, who said he had known the Jones family for about 20 years. The police want to talk to the man, but it's not clear whether he faces any criminal charges.

Norman Siegel, head of the city chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, offered the man legal advice and said, "this guy might not have to worry." He said state law permits the use of deadly physical force if there is appropriate justification, including robbery.

But he called for a police review of the slaying and added: "Just because people think this guy's a hero doesn't mean they shouldn't do a thorough investigation."

Jerry Presler, president of the Federation of New York State Rifle and Pistol Clubs, said the gun club has offered the man a \$1,000 "Courageous Citizen" award and free legal counsel, but urged him not to come forward.



Transplant leaves for home.

Liver transplant baby Ichihiro Tsuruyama, 21 months-old and his mother Atsuko at the Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital before leaving for Japan

Dec 12. Ichihiro, is the world's first liver transplant to be donated by a living person, his mother, in Sept of this year. (Reuter wirephoto)

Trekking team reach S. Pole

Peary claim accepted

ST PAUL, Minnesota, Dec 12. (AP) A six-man international ski and sled dog team has reached the South Pole, a milestone in a planned 4,000-mile (6,400-km) trek across Antarctica, the team headquarters said. "Here we are. Horrah," read a satellite message sent by the team to the expedition's St Paul headquarters, said Cathy de Moll, an expedition spokeswoman at the mission's St Paul headquarters.

The international trans-Antarctica expedition is believed to have reached the pole at about 1900 GMT yesterday, based on satellite tracking of the team. De Moll said. Officials had said last weekend that they were having difficulty establishing radio contact with the expedition, which has travelled more than 1,900 miles (3,000 km) since leaving the northern tip of the Antarctic peninsula on July 27.

The team, made up of explorers from France, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, Japan, China and the United States, is making its \$11 million, seven-month journey to bring world attention to Antarctica and to demonstrate the power of international co-operation. The group is the first to reach the pole by dogsled since Roald Amundsen was the first to do so on Dec 14, 1911. But the team's arrival marks only the halfway point for the expedition, which is the first unmechanised traverse of Antarctica.

American scientists at the Scott-Amundsen Scientific Research base at the South Pole gave the adventurers a tour of the dome station, said De Moll. The team plans to stay at the South Pole until Friday, but hasn't specified why, she said. "We are surmising that they want to dry out their clothes and make sure their dogs are in really

top form before they cross the Area of Inaccessibility," she said. The Area of Inaccessibility is an 850-mile (1,370-km) void of ice where neither radio nor air-plane contact is guaranteed.

The team's leader, Will Steger, 45, of Minnesota led a similar assault on the North Pole three years ago.

At one point early in the expedition, two of the team's three sleds were damaged in a crashing descent on ice, and at another point, a French doctor had to descend into an ice crevasse to rescue a stranded sled dog.

The expedition's other members are co-leader Jean-Louis Etienne of France, Victor Boyarsky from the Soviet Union, Geoff Somers from Great Britain, Keizo Funaito from Japan and Qin Dafe from China.

The goal of the trek is to reach Mirnyy, a Soviet science station on the continent's Indian Ocean shore, which is 1,600 miles (2,400 km) and three months farther to the east, across the Area of Inaccessibility.

The dogs must continue to pull uphill, from 10,000 feet (3,100 metres) at the South Pole to 11,500 feet (3,500 metres) at Vostok, through ever-thinning air.

A year-long analysis of Robert E. Peary's photographs and notes establishes his claim to have been the first to reach the North Pole, the National Geographic Society said yesterday.

The study was undertaken by the Navigators Foundation, a non-profit organisation that had asserted this year that there was room for scholarly doubt about Peary's claim that he reached the pole on April 6, 1909.

The private National Geographic Society sponsored Peary's mission and has defended the explorer's integrity. It approved of the Navigators Foundation study and reported its findings.

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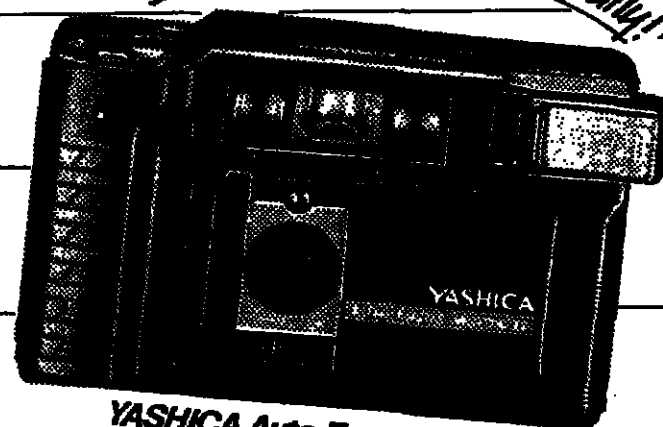
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Sleep tight

Bag 'em

SINGAPORE, Dec 12. (AP) Two airlines have announced plans to issue sleeping bags to passengers stranded at the airport here when hotel rooms are not available. Singapore Airlines said it will use 400 sleeping bags to make waiting for delayed flights or unexpected layovers at Changi airport more bearable, an airline spokesman said yesterday. He said they will be used "only as a last resort."

Cosby said in an interview published in Sunday's Los Angeles Times.

The problem isn't alcohol or drugs — at the Rehab Centre her urine showed up negative. It's behavioural. She's very stubborn.

Miss Cosby checked out of a drug rehabilitation centre in September after acknowledging cocaine, marijuana and alcohol abuse.

"Looking back, I can't believe how dad managed to go on with his show every week, portraying

America's favourite father, while having a daughter like me causing so much pain," she was quoted as saying in the National Enquirer's October 10th edition.

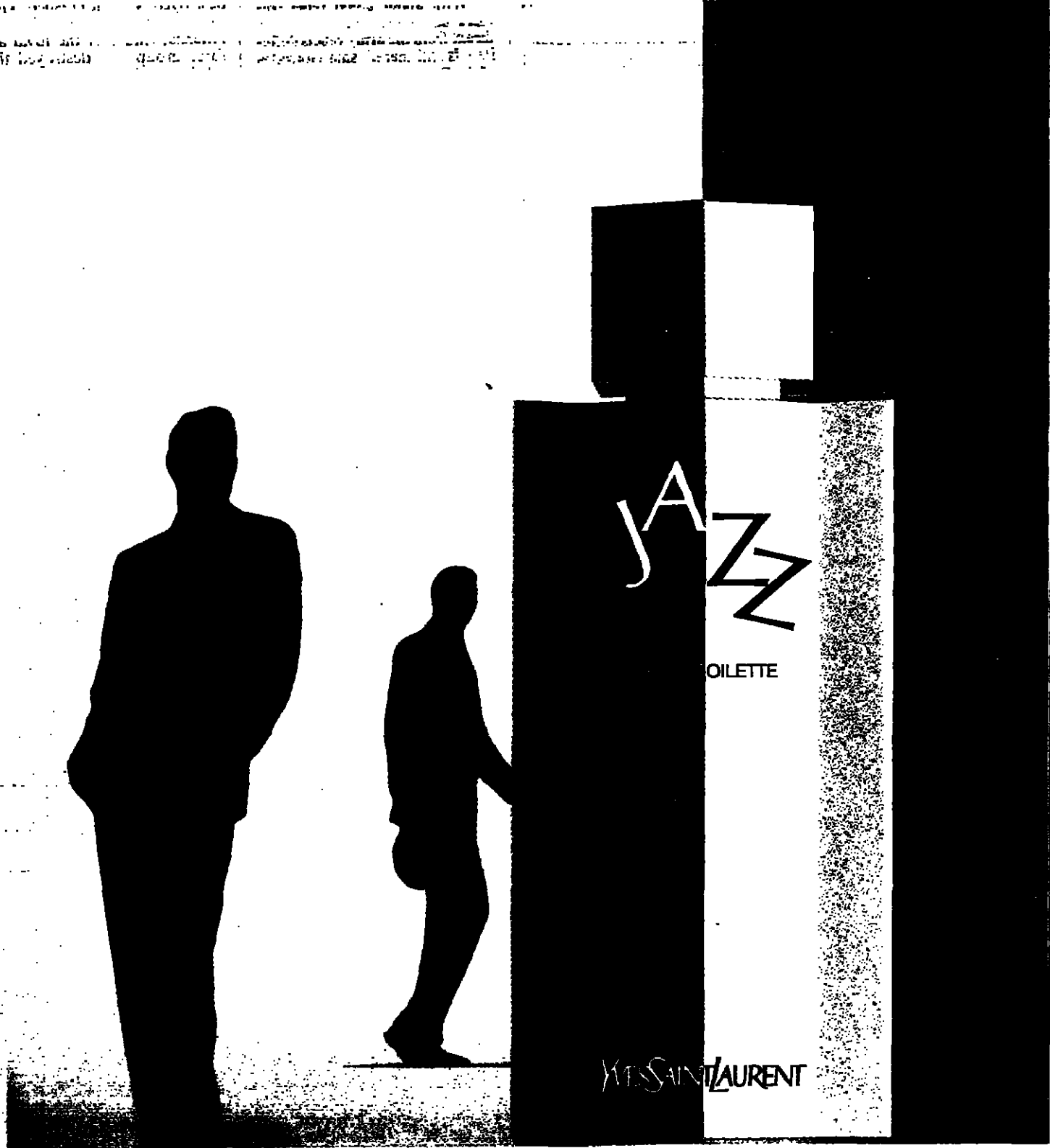
Her father, whose best seller "Fatherhood" is about raising his five children, said that "tough love" — letting Brian work it out on her own — was the only way to allow her to deal with her problems.

NASHVILLE, Tennessee: Country music star Johnny Cash, who entered a two-week drug abuse relapse programme in November, says he is not bitter about his problems but he thinks drug abuse often is misunderstood.

"It is a genetic disease," Cash said in an interview published Sunday. "When I go into treatment, it is exactly as if I were having chemotherapy for cancer or taking insulin for diabetes."

Cash said he entered the drug abuse relapse programme when he feared he was starting to backslide by becoming dependent on narcotic painkillers after double bypass heart surgery late last year.

"I've bottomed out on drugs before, and I don't ever want to go through a hell like that again," said Cash, 57, whose hits include "Ring of Fire," "Folsom Prison Blues" and "I Walk the Line."



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Presidents call to demobilise Salvador rebels

US, Soviets must play bigger role in Centam peace

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Dec 12, (AP): Central American presidents called today for the demobilisation of El Salvador's leftist guerrillas and said the United States and Soviet Union should play a bigger role in regional peace.

"This is a blow against those who want war," President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua said.

The agreement expressed support for El Salvador's rightist government as a government "born out of a democratic and pluralistic process."

It also "forcefully demanded" that the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN, publicly renounce "violent actions that directly or indirectly affect civilian populations."

The agreement condemned "armed activities and terrorism by irregular forces in the region" and said the FMLN should cease

hostilities and resume talks with the government.

It also asked UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to try to restart peace talks between the rebels and El Salvador's rightist government.

At the end of a two-day summit, the presidents also agreed in a 13-point document that aid to US-backed Nicaraguan Contra rebels should be diverted to a commission working to disband the rebels and repatriate them to Nicaragua or third countries.

The rebels broke off talks after the Oct 31 bombing of a union headquarters in San Salvador and on Nov 11 launched an urban offensive that produced some of the heaviest fighting of their decade-old war. Hundreds of civilians are believed to have died amid the fierce combat in the capital between the rebels and troops of El Salvador's US-backed government.

The summit accord said the United Nations should arrange a more direct role for the United States and the Soviet Union and oversee the demobilisation of both the FMLN and the US-backed Nicaraguan rebels.

Central America was a thorny issue at the recent superpower summit in Malta, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev told President George Bush the Soviet Union was not sending arms to Central America. The Soviets are also reportedly pressuring both Cuba and Nicaragua to end support for leftist insurgencies in the region.

The Central American presidents also offered their support to Nicaragua's leftist government, saying the United States should funnel into demobilisation efforts the non-lethal aid that has kept the Contras together in Honduran base camps.



The five Central American presidents join hands for peace at the end of a mass to pray for peace on Dec 11. Left to right: Jose Azcona, Honduras; Cristiani, El

Salvador; Oscar Arias, Costa Rica; Vinicio Cereno, Guatemala; and Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua. (Reuters wirephoto)

Salvador army kills 19 leftists

Rebel town bombed

SAN PEDRO NONUALCO, El Salvador, Dec 12, (Reuters): Army helicopters and planes rocketed and strafed a town in El Salvador yesterday after it was occupied by leftist guerrillas, witnesses said.

Red Cross workers said one civilian was killed and eight wounded in the 30-minute bombardment which damaged houses in San Pedro Nonualco, 60 km (35 miles) east of San Salvador.

Soldiers and rebels also fought sporadic battles in the province in La Paz as Central American presidents met in Costa Rica to try to steer both sides to the negotiating table.

Residents said Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) rebels entered San Pedro Nonualco, a town of about 10,000, early on Monday and occupied it for about five hours.

An army unit intercepted a group of rebels after they pulled out of the town, journalists said. An army officer said both sides took casualties in the firefight which followed but gave no figures.

Rebels also attacked the nearby towns of Santa Maria Ostuma and Tonatepeque, where two civilians were killed, local journalists said.

The army said it had killed 19 guerrillas and wounded 11 in several firefights mainly in the east of the country since Sunday night.

The capital, scene of heavy street fighting for several weeks after the rebels launched their biggest offensive of the 10-year long war on Nov 11, was quiet on Monday. More than 2,500 people have been killed in the offensive.

Five Central American presidents were meeting in Costa Rica to seek an end to the fighting.

Costa Rica has proposed a Christmas truce in El Salvador as a prelude for negotiations between the FMLN and the right-wing government.

President Bush said he has been "guaranteed to my satisfaction" that Lucia Barrera de Cerna, eyewitness to the recent killings of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador, is being treated properly by US authorities.

Bush appeared to be attempting to rebut charges made by Salvadoran Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas US officials, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, were subjecting Cerna, a housekeeper for the slain priests, to "brainwashing, threats and psychological torment" in an attempt to discredit her testimony implicating Salvadoran soldiers in the slayings.

Paraguay: The cabinet offered to resign to give Paraguayan President Gen. Andres Rodriguez a free hand to settle factional strife within the ruling Colorado Party.

"The 11 ministers met several days ago and decided to put at the disposition of the President our respective resignations," Education Minister Dionisio Gonzalez Torres told reporters after meeting with Rodriguez and the ministers of justice and the interior.

Brazil: Right-wing populist Fernando Collor de Mello and Socialist firebrand Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva stood virtually neck-and-neck on Monday just six days before Brazil's presidential election.

It will be the country's first direct vote for president in 29 years and coincides with acute economic crisis.

The latest opinion poll carried out by Datafolha for the newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo showed Collor with 47 per cent and Lula with 44 per cent.

Guatemala: A student leader who fled Guatemala after five of his cohorts were slain and another five were kidnapped has been murdered, police said.

Marco Tulio Montenegro had only recently returned to Guatemala from Panama, where he took refuge after armed men with walkie talkies began grabbing student leaders off the streets in August.

Peru: Maoist Shining Path guerrillas slaughtered 49 peasants in attacks against highland villagers viewed as traitors to the rebel struggle, police said.

In the bloodiest raid, a rebel column of 80 to 100



A young girl grimaces in pain in San Pedro, El Salvador after being injured in an aerial attack. (Reuters wirephoto)



The mother (centre) of a wounded girl and her neighbours pause in a silent prayer over the girl in San Pedro Nonualco, El Salvador. (Reuters wirephoto)

fighters killed 30 peasants, including several women, before dawn Monday in Paucha, a village of 800 people 30 miles (50 kilometres) south of here, police said Monday.

A military court has found two police officers guilty of homicide in the slaying of 60 to 70 guerrilla inmates after a bloody prison riot was put down in 1986.

The court on Monday said 60 to 70 of the 124 Shining Path inmates killed in rioting at Lurigancho Prison on June 19, 1986, were shot to death after they surrendered.

Mexican pleads not guilty in agent's death

LOS ANGELES, Dec 12, (AP): The brother-in-law of a former Mexican president has pleaded "absolutely innocent" to charges that he plotted to torture and kill a US drug agent.

Speaking loudly, 59-year-old Ruben Zuno Arce entered the plea yesterday through an interpreter during an arraignment before US district court Judge Edward Rafeedie.

Zuno was charged with conspiring to kill DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazar in 1985 and other violations in an indictment that said he is a

member of a drug cartel. He took part in a meeting with the four other men during the first week of February 1985, to discuss "the kidnapping and interrogation" of Camarena, the indictment said.

He was part of a plot to murder Camarena "for the purpose of maintaining and increasing" trafficking in marijuana and cocaine, the complaint said.

Conviction could result in life in prison. Juan Jose Bernabe Ramirez, a co-

defendant, is charged with the felony murder of a federal agent, among other things.

Zuno, a businessman and brother-in-law of former Mexican President Luis Echeverria, was arrested Saturday by DEA agents as he got off a plane arriving from Mexico at Los Angeles international airport.

On Feb 7, 1985, Camarena was abducted by members of the Guadalajara Narcotics cartel, an organisation that distributes tonnes of marijuana and cocaine, the indictment said.



Ortega receives a kiss from a young Costa Rican admirer as he leaves a San Jose church. (Reuters wirephoto)

Millions of kids doomed: Unicef

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 12, (AP): Third World spending on armaments and debt service rather than health and nutrition could doom 100 million children to death by disease and starvation in the 1990s, according to a Unicef report released today.

James P. Grant, the executive director of the UN Children's Fund, said in his annual report that the developing nations collectively spend nearly a billion dollars each day, over half their total expenditures, on weapons and debt service.

That expense trickles down, costing each family in the Third World more than \$400 a year and depriving them of basic nutrition and health care, he said.

Almost 8,000 children die each day because they are not immunised, almost 7,000 die daily from dehydration caused by diarrhoea, and about 6,000 are killed each day by pneumonia, Grant said.

The cost of immunising all these children and providing medicines for dehydration and pneumonia would be about \$2.5 billion a year, Grant estimates in the report, "The state of the world's children—1990."

"It is a great deal of money," Grant said. "It is as much as the Soviet Union has been spending on vodka. It is as much as US companies have been spending on advertising cigarettes. It is as much as 10 per cent of the EEC's annual subsidy to its farmers. It is as much as 2 per cent of the developing world's military spending."

If present trends continue, the report says, over 100 million children will die needlessly in the next decade.

"They will die in the sunken-eyed coma of dehydration, or in the gasping extremities of pneumonia, or in the iron grip of tetanus, or in the fever of measles, or on the rack of whooping cough," Grant said.

Those five illnesses, all treatable or preventable by inexpensive vaccines, antibiotics or oral rehydration therapy, account for over half of the 14 million annual child deaths and the bulk of the malnutrition in the world, according to Unicef.

To mobilise the political will to solve these problems in the 1990s, Unicef is calling for a "world summit for children" to be held at UN headquarters in September. Over 100 nations have endorsed the idea, Grant said.

"It is time that the needs of children were given this kind of priority," he said.

"Protecting the physical and mental development of children is the most important of all investments in the social and economic development of our societies."

"Doing what can now be done to achieve that goal is therefore an issue worthy of its place on the agenda of the world's political leaders," he said.

America

Japanese director to be honoured:

Akira Kurosawa, 79-year-old Japanese director of such films as "Rashomon" and "Seven Samurai," will receive an honorary Oscar award at the presentations on March 26, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles said yesterday.

The award will be presented to Kurosawa for his cinematic accomplishments that have inspired, delighted, enriched and entertained world-wide audiences and influenced filmmakers throughout the world," the academy, which presents the awards, said.

Laser may limit cancer spread: A certain type of Laser "scalpel" may help limit the spread of cancer during surgical procedures, researchers reported yesterday in Chicago.

Northwestern University researchers said their laboratory work shows a scalpel that employs a neodymium-yttrium-aluminum-garnet Laser may reduce "knife metastasis," the inadvertent transfer of cancer cells from a tumour to healthy tissue during surgery.

Dr Vijay Maer, chief of surgery at Grant Hospital, and James Radosevich, an assistant professor at Northwestern's medical school, used the Laser scalpel in a series of tests designed to simulate surgery. (UPI)

US launch rocket: The military yesterday in Cape Canaveral launched a rocket carrying into orbit a satellite that joins a network of spacecraft which orbit US and allied military forces where they are.

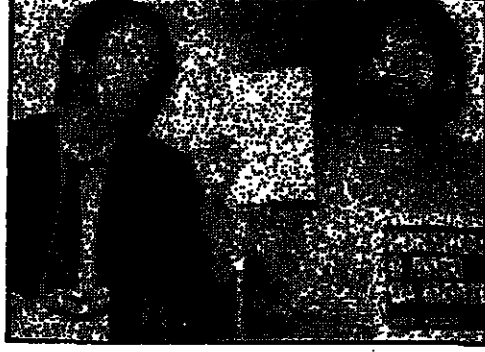
The Air Force Delta 2 blazed away from its launch pad at 1:10 pm (1810 GMT) after being postponed one day because of a problem with a fuel tank pressurisation system.

Air Force Lt. Col. Ron Rand, the launch commander, said the satellite was put into orbit 25 minutes after the liftoff. (AP)

US bases on edge of moon probe: The captain of the US Navy's nuclear submarine USS George Eastman (SSN-593) has refused to endorse the navy's finding that a gunner's mate likely caused an explosion that killed 47 sailors aboard the battleship.

The service, in a Sept 7 report, concluded that Clayton Hartwig "most likely" caused the blast by inserting some type of detonator between bags of gunpowder in one of the ship's 16-inch guns.

"I do not agree or disagree," Capt. Fred Moosally told the Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday his first public testimony about the incident. (AP)



Mendes successor

The successor to Chico Mendes as the union leader of the rubber tappers in Brazil, holds up a copy of the report on the Brazilian state of Acre during a press conference in Washington Dec 11. In the report, he outlines recent death threats to union organisers and plans to help save the Brazilian rainforest. At left is Dr Stephan Schwartzman, an Environmental Defence Fund anthropologist. (Reuters wirephoto)



McCartney in concert

Rock star Paul McCartney sings during concert at Madison Square Gardens in New York Dec 11. (Reuters wirephoto)

Drunken driving: 'scourge' of 1980s

President George Bush, calling drunken driving "one of the most deadly scourges" of our times, promised Monday to keep up pressures to get intoxicated drivers off the road.

Bush said the public outcry in recent years against drunken drivers has been "one of the most amazing success stories of the 1980s." (AP)

Drunken driving deaths fell 20 per cent in the last six years, although the number of miles travelled rose 25 per cent, Bush said. (AP)

Sex priestess jailed: A convicted prostitute who says she has had intercourse with 2,000 men as the high priestess of an "ancient" sex-worshipping church was sentenced yesterday to 360 days in jail in Los Angeles for a probation violation.

Mary Ellen Tracy, 46, the self-proclaimed "high priestess of the Church of the Most High Goddess" was found by municipal court judge Marjorie Ober to have violated her probation because of her arrest Nov 14 on suspicion of pandering.

On Sept 22 Ober put Tracy on three years' probation and sentenced her to 90 days in county jail for her conviction on a single count of operating a house of prostitution. Tracy later posted bail to allow her to delay serving the 90-day sentence while she appeals her conviction. (UPI)

Butchers bake Christmas pies

Butchers in a small English town are baking 1,000 pork pies as a Christmas present for the homeless who sleep on the streets of London.

The butchers of Malton will also be commemorating the northern town's gift almost 150 years ago of a huge pie to novelist Charles Dickens.

Dickens, author of "A Christmas Carol" which has come to symbolise the charitable spirit of the season, shared his pie with the town's poor whose plight he highlighted in many of his other classics. (AP)

Contestant under for life: An Athens court sentenced a Greek merchant to life imprisonment yesterday for selling heroin, the second time in two weeks a life sentence was passed for drug dealing.

Thomas Demetriou, 49, a fur shop owner, was arrested while selling five kg (11 pounds) of heroin smuggled from Turkey to an undercover policeman.

Two weeks ago four people received life sentences for smuggling heroin into Greece from Turkey, reflecting growing concern over hard drugs. (Reuters)

Tower of Pisa closed for repairs: The Leaning Tower of Pisa will be closed to the public soon so that workers can begin repairing the 800-year-old monument, Mayor Giacomo Granchi said yesterday.

Granchi, who announced the decision after a meeting of city officials, said he plans to shut the marble tower for an indefinite period after the Christmas holidays. (AP)

Italian minister slams delay: Italy's Environment Minister Giorgio Ruffolo yesterday slammed delays in carrying out an international plan to save the coastal city of Venice from a threat of catastrophic flood damage.

He was speaking to delegates from over 30 "cities on water" from all over the world at the start of a three-day United Nations-backed conference to examine the implications of a predicted sea level rise as the result of global warming. (Reuters)

Latin America

Naval veterans remember: More than 150 British and German naval veterans paid homage today to their comrades who died 50 years ago in the World War II battle of the River Plate, fought off the coast of Uruguay.

The meeting ceremony took place on the port docks, where one of the anchors from the Nazi pocket battleship, Admiral Graf Spee, is preserved as a monument.

The veterans and former enemies travelled from England, Germany, and Argentina, where German survivors of the battle still live, to participate in remonitions commemorating the Dec 14, 1939 sea fight. At the Montevideo docks, where the Graf Spee was anchored for repairs from the fighting that killed 122 Allied and German sailors, the veterans embraced and reminisced. (UPI)

Journalist killed in Colombia: A journalist who criticised organised crime was gunned down Sunday as he ate lunch with his family in Valle del Cauca state, and the death toll in last week's massive bus bomb attack in Bogota rose to 63, authorities reported today.

Jose William Espejo, director of El Tabloide de Tuluva newspaper, was in a restaurant with his family in Tuluva, 147 miles (245 km) southwest of the capital, when gunmen burst into the dining room and shot him six times, killing him instantly, police said.

Police said they had not established motives for the killing and had not captured any suspects. (UPI)

Violence threatens chances for fair elections in Nicaragua

MANAGUA, Dec 12, (AP): The finger-pointing continues over who started the worst riot in Nicaragua's political campaign and why. Both sides say they are powerless to stop violence that threatens the fairness of upcoming elections.

"What can we do?" said a high-level official of the ruling Sandinista Party. "If we have the police there, they'll claim we're repressing them."

The violence started with stone-throwing melees in early November and culminated Sunday in a riot that left one man dead and more than 25 people injured, many seriously. The

general election is scheduled Feb 25.

The National Opposition Union (UNO) leaders say the riot was part of a Sandinista plot to make campaigning impossible and force them to pull out of a race.

The Sandinistas claim UNO is setting the stage to do just that: pull out of the race and discredit the elections and the government.

The perception that the disturbances could be caused by Sandinista hotbeds beyond the control of the party leadership was denied by a Sandinista official.

"We have very good control," the official

said. "If we didn't, there would be plenty of people dead."

American observers and members of the US-backed opposition coalition have blamed the Sandinistas for a weekend attack on opposition supporters.

"Angry mobs of individuals mostly dressed in T-shirts imprinted with the letters FSLN attacked UNO demonstrators with machetes, stones and clubs," the UNO, said in a statement. FSLN is the Spanish acronym for the Sandinista Front for National Liberation.

UNO also lodged a complaint with

Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council.

In Costa Rica, Nicaragua leaders and the UNO courted reporters covering the five-nation Central American summit to blame each other for the violence.

UNO campaign chief Antonio Lacayo flew to the site of the Costa Rica summit, where he accused Sandinista activists of "a clear campaign of very strong intimidation, including physical aggression. The objective of this campaign is to ensure that there are no elections in Nicaragua."

General Assembly begins debate on apartheid

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 12, (AP) The General Assembly today begins its first debate on apartheid and is expected to call for dismantling of the system of racial segregation and for sanctions against South Africa.

The assembly annually adopts resolutions condemning South Africa for its apartheid structure, but this is the first time that several days will be devoted to the exercise of denunciation.

More than 120 world leaders and diplomats are expected to address the 159-nation world body, including Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe today.

Assembly President Maj-Gen. Joseph Garba of Nigeria said yesterday that he is hoping "for a consensus declaration which would hopefully send a clear message to South Africa about the need to dismantle apartheid completely."

General Assembly resolutions are not binding, unlike Security Council resolutions, and they reflect the sentiment of the majority. However, they carry considerable moral and symbolic weight.

The proposed document is entitled, "Declaration on apartheid and its destructive consequences in Southern Africa."

South Africa's Foreign Minister, R.F. Botha, said in a letter yesterday to the secretary-general that he considers the special session and the proposed declaration to be "marginally a blatant intervention in the domestic affairs of a member state."

South Africa is a UN member but does not vote because

the General Assembly has repeatedly rejected its credentials in recent years.

"Negotiating constitutional, economic and social changes in any sovereign state is the inalienable right of the citizens of that state," Botha's letter said. "Attempts by other governments, however well-meaning, or international organisations to usurp this responsibility should be rejected."

He emphasised that the South African government has taken steps to remove obstacles to negotiation.

Walsh blames CIA Bush ducks

WASHINGTON, Dec 12, (UPI) Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh disclosed that President Bush refused to meet with him to discuss what Walsh believes is US Intelligence Agency interference in Iran-Contra criminal cases.

In a report to Congress, Walsh included a letter, hand-delivered to the White House on Oct 19, asking Bush for a meeting.

The letter complained that Attorney-General Dick Thornburgh and intelligence agencies were causing a "very serious problem" by interfering with efforts to prosecute Joseph Fernandez, who was the top Central Intelligence Agency official in Costa Rica during the major events of the Iran-Contra scandal.

Bush did not respond, but White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray wrote Walsh on Oct 25 that, "such a meeting would not be appropriate," and told him to work out the disputes with Thornburgh — the cabinet officer Walsh had named as part of the problem.

"Unless different standards for the release of information to the courts are adopted by the intelligence agencies," Walsh wrote Bush, "we face the likelihood that former high officials cannot be tried for crimes related to their conduct in public office."

If the effort to withhold information continues, Walsh warned, "we lose a much more important national value — the rule of law."



Buchi waves to his supporters as he ends his electoral campaign. (Reuters wirephoto)



Chilean riot police arrest a demonstrator during clashes between government supporters and opposition. (Reuters wirephoto)

Campaigning ends Chileans rally

SANTIAGO, Chile, Dec 12, (AP) Campaigning for elections to pick a successor to military President Augusto Pinochet ended with an evening street rally for pro-government candidate Hernan Buchi that drew tens of thousands of supporters.

As the demonstration ended, both supporters and opponents of Buchi skirmished with police, who used water cannon to scatter crowds from the downtown streets. There were no reports of injuries or arrests.

Chileans vote Thursday for a president and congress to replace the right-wing authoritarian government of Pinochet, who has ruled since seizing power in a bloody 1973 coup. By law, all polling had to end yesterday, full 48 hours before election day.

Supporters of Buchi, a 40-year-old former finance minister for Pinochet, packed several blocks on a warm late spring night and cheered as the candidate predicted an upset victory.

"We are going to give them a big surprise," he told the crowd.

Buchi is an underdog to opposition candidate Patricio Aylwin, who holds a commanding lead of about 20 percentage points in pre-election surveys.

Aylwin, a Christian Democrat who is backed by a coalition of 17 centrist and leftist parties, held his final rally on Sunday, drawing hundreds of thousands of people to the city's biggest park.

Police said they had no immediate estimate of the Buchi rally turnout, which appeared much smaller than that of Aylwin. Buchi's campaign chief, Pablo Barona, declined to give an estimate.

Clothes trail leads to Malta

STOCKHOLM, Dec 12, (Reuters) Scottish investigators have gone to Malta in pursuit of a link between clothes belonging to a detained Palestinian and last December's Lockerbie airliner bombing, a Swedish newspaper reported today.

Kvalvposten said the detectives arrived on the island last Friday with bags of clothes seized last month at the apartment of Mohamed Abu Talb, 35, a Palestinian who had been living in the Swedish town of Uppsala.

The Swedish government last week approved transfer of the clothes to British police after a court in Uppsala ruled that the seizure was legally justified. The court noted that Abu Talb was suspected in Britain of murder or complicity in murder.

Investigators were showing some of the seized items to a shopkeeper in the Maltese town of Sliema, Kvalvposten said.

According to British and Swedish newspaper reports, the Sliema shopkeeper in November last year sold clothes found one month later among the Lockerbie debris.

The blast-damaged items were believed to have been in the suitcase containing the bomb which blew up the Pan Am jet as it flew over the Scottish town of Lockerbie on Dec 21, killing 270 people.

Swedish police documents show that Abu Talb visited Malta in October and November last year.

Abu Talb is detained pending the verdict in a separate trial in Stockholm in which he and three other Palestinians are accused of bomb attacks against US and Jewish targets in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Amsterdam in 1985 and 1986.

Through his lawyer Sven-Erik Sjogren, Abu Talb has denied any connection with the Lockerbie bomb, and he has not yet been questioned by Scottish investigators.

Swedish police declined all comment on the probe, and a Scottish police spokesman, asked about the Swedish newspaper report, replied: "It has consistently been our policy not to comment on the significance of any of our inquiries."

Italy today marked the 20th anniversary of a Milan bomb outrage which spawned more than a decade of bloody terrorism but remains unsolved despite nine court hearings.

Demonstrators marched through Milan and politicians attended ceremonies at a bank near Milan's soaring Gothic cathedral in the Piazza Fontana where a bomb killed 16 people and injured 88 in 1969.

The attack sparked a decade of rioting bombings and left-wing urban terrorism known as "the years of lead."

The failure to pin blame on anyone has caused widespread outrage and bitterness, reflected in Italian newspapers, which today carried headlines like: "Still no truth after 20 years" and "the end of innocence."

"Twenty years ago Piazza Fontana began the most troubled and dark period of our republican history... after Piazza Fontana both rightwing and leftwing terrorism became more virulent and dangerous," the Milan newspaper Il Giornale said in a front page editorial.

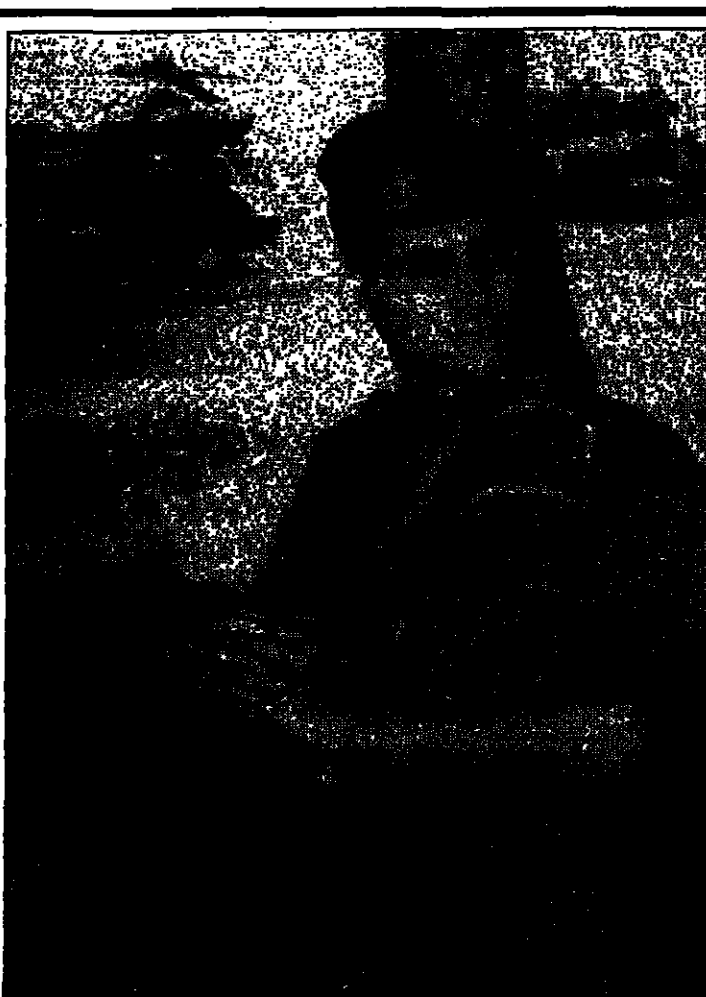
The case involved high level cover-ups by both politicians and corrupt secret service agents who infiltrated provocateurs among left and rightwing terrorist groups.

Stalker enters innocence plea

BURBANK, California, Dec 12, (AP) A man authorities say, stalked television talk show host Johnny Carson for two years pleaded innocent to charges of sending tapes and letters threatening to kill Carson unless he paid him \$5 million.

Ken Orville Gause of Milwaukee entered the plea yesterday in municipal court on one felony count each of stalking and sending threatening letters. He has held in lieu of \$250,000 bail pending a preliminary hearing Thursday.

Gause, 36, was arrested Dec 5 in the lobby of KNBC-TV studios two hours before the taping of Carson's popular "Tonight Show."



A French paratrooper mounts guard under a coconut tree at the temporary base of the French task force on Mayotte Island. (Reuters wirephoto)

Denard seeks Paris asylum

Pressure to quit

DZAOUZI, Mayotte Island, Dec 12, (Agencies) White mercenaries who have seized control of the Comoros islands are demanding asylum in France, presenting Paris with an embarrassing political problem, diplomats said today.

French mercenary Bob Denard says he and his soldiers would leave the Indian Ocean Republic of the Comoros if offered a fair payment and an honourable exit, the newspaper Le Figaro reported today.

The conservative paper quoted Denard, who wields great power in the island nation and heads its palace guard, as saying in an interview that France and South Africa were both pressuring him to leave.

The diplomats in Moroni, capital of the Indian Ocean islands, said the demand had deadlocked negotiations for the peaceful departure of the 30-odd soldiers of fortune while France considered its response.

France and South Africa had been closely associated with the hired guns but turned against them after the assassination of President Ahmed Abdallah on November 26. It is widely believed the mercenaries killed

him. The two countries are now discreetly negotiating for the departure of the men, most of whom are French.

The former French colony has been in turmoil since the Nov 26 assassination of President Ahmed Abdallah Abdel Rahman. Denard denies reports that he was responsible for Abdallah's death.

French troops have been deployed in the Indian Ocean territories of Reunion and Mayotte, preparing to evacuate the 1,600 French citizens living in the Comoros.

Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement said yesterday that France did not intend to carry out a military intervention but must prepare "for the worst."

A certain number of powerful means have been put in place to meet any eventuality," Chevenement said during a visit to an air force base at Orleans in central France.

Le Figaro quoted Denard as saying his forces would not shoot first if French soldiers landed, but adding: "There is such a thing as legitimate self-defence. We won't let ourselves be slaughtered like lambs."

Greek scientist finds 11-million-year-old skull

ATHENS, Greece, Dec 12, (AP) A Greek paleontologist said yesterday he had discovered a fossil that may be a missing link in the development of modern man.

The partial skull is between 9 million and 11 million years old, said paleontologist Giorgos Koufos, and appears to link an early primate, known as ramapithecus, with one of modern man's ancestors.

"We believe it represents a transitional period in the development of primitive hominids (two-legged primates) to the more developed ones such as australopithecus," Koufos said in a telephone interview.

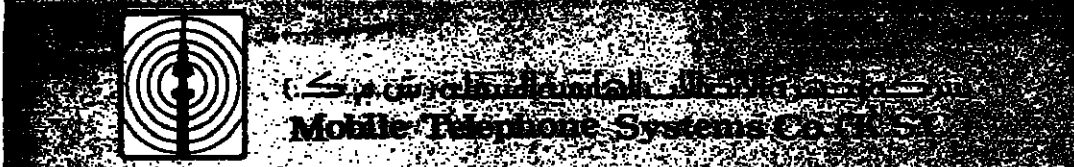
Australopithecus is believed to be a direct ancestor of

modern man and to have lived 1 to 5 million years ago. Ramapithecus was an ape-like creature but its dental characteristics were different from those of the ape family.

Koufos said that his finding near the village of Xirochori, 24 kilometres (15 miles) from Salonika, "resembles a primitive kind of australopithecus. We believe it is a link in this development."

However, he said the back part of the cranium was missing and the fossilised face needed further study.

Ramapithecus fossils, dating from 12 to 14 million years ago, have been discovered in India, East Africa and Hungary, but, according to Koufos, none tied this primate to modern man's ancestor, the australopithecus.



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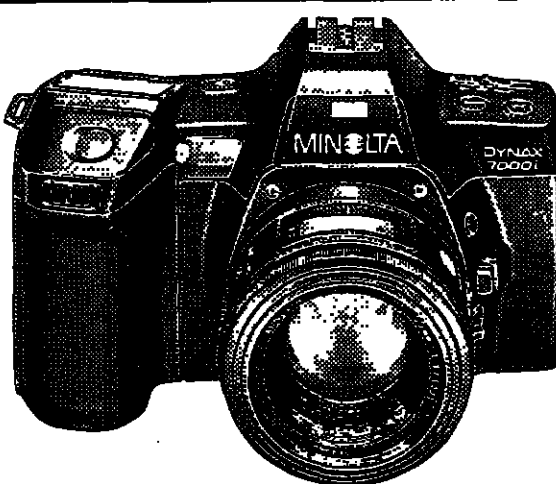
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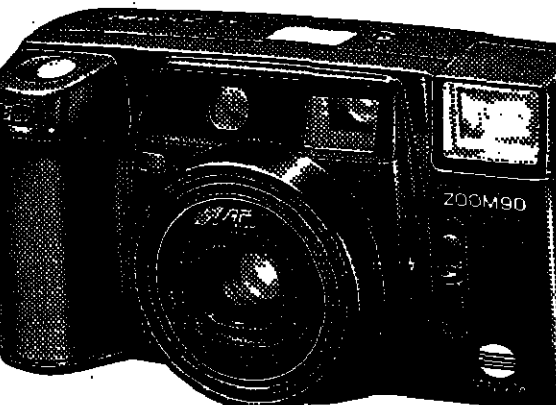
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Soviet House rejects debate on party role

Congress of People's rebuff a victory for Gorbachev, who wants to tackle economic problems first

MOSCOW, Dec 12 (AP) — The Soviet Parliament rejected a bid by reformers today to follow several Eastern European countries and a Soviet republic in striking the Communist Party's monopoly on power from the constitution.

The rebuff was a victory for President Mikhail Gorbachev, who wants the Congress of People's deputies to focus on the nation's severe economic problems.

The congress, on the first day of a 10-day session, refused to include on its agenda a discussion of Article 6 of the Soviet constitution, which calls the Communist Party "the leading and

guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system."

But the vote total, 1,139 to 839, indicated the idea has gained strength among deputies, nearly 90 per cent of whom are party members. Fifty-six abstained from the vote. The rest of the 2,250 deputies were absent.

Poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, supporting a move by deputies from the Baltic republics and the reformist inter-regional deputies group, said: "Authority must not be only written into one paragraph, but proven every day."

Later, Yevtushenko called the vote a "noble defeat" in light of the fact that most deputies are party members. "We

got 839 votes," Yevtushenko said. "I didn't expect that."

The Baltic republic of Lithuania last week became the first of the Soviet Union's 15 republics to strike a similar provision from its own constitution, replacing it with one allowing a multi-party system. Legislators there ordered that a law be written in 45 days outlining how other political parties will be registered.

In east Europe, Gorbachev's reforms have paved the way for Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia to end their communist parties' monopolies on power. Yesterday, Bulgaria's leadership proposed similar measures and a

multi-party system.

Gorbachev, in an address before the vote on Article 6, called for a sober debate of the issue, excluding efforts to make political capital out of it.

He noted the party held its dominant role in Soviet society without such a provision until the article was added in a new constitution adopted 12 years ago.

"We cannot start political speculation," he said.

Gorbachev urged the deputies, instead, to concentrate on a government plan to straighten out the country's economic mess.

Key economic laws have been sub-

mitted for public discussion, and Gorbachev said they could be adopted next spring. The 542-member Supreme Soviet legislature debated economic reform laws in its just-completed fall session.

"We need drastic reforms," Gorbachev said of the economy. "So far, there are no improvements in this area, that's why the Supreme Soviet decided that the main question would be discussion of economic reform."

A detailed reform plan was developed by economist Leonid Abalkin to make the Soviet rouble convertible on world markets, jettison money-losing state-run businesses and

fill empty store shelves.

Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov planned to present the general plan later to the parliament, after it voted 1,387-537 today against efforts by reformers to discuss the plan's specifics laws during the session. Sixty-eight abstained.

Before that vote, however, debate over land and property laws led to an acrimonious exchange between the Soviet president and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov.

Sakharov has urged that the Communist Party's monopoly on power be broken, and last week called for a two-hour general strike on Monday to press that demand. The strike fizzled.

Baker pledges US support for GDR

Unprecedented visit to East Berlin

POTSDAM, East Germany, Dec 12 (Reuters) — US Secretary of State James Baker made an unprecedented visit to East Germany today to pledge American support to Prime Minister Hans Modrow in dismantling 40 years of Stalinism.

After calling in a speech in West Berlin for a new Europe, Baker matched words with deeds by driving over the Glienicke Bridge, scene of many cold war spy swaps, for a one-hour meeting with East Germany's new reformist prime minister.

He told journalists later: "We talked at quite some length about the importance of this reform effort moving forward in a peaceful and stable way. That as much as anything else represents the political signal

that we wanted to send by being here today.

"We wanted to let the people of the (East) German Democratic Republic know about our support for the reforms taking place in this country."

Baker said he had told Modrow he was pleased his roundtable talks with opposition groups handled to the setting of a date for elections next May and that he was introducing economic reforms.

Sources in the American party said Modrow had assured Baker the election decision and the process of reform were irrevocable, and that Baker had said Washington was ready to respond to East Germany's economic needs.

A soldier rolls barbed wire fence as Czechoslovakia started to dismantle part of its Iron curtain frontier with the West. (Reuters wirephoto)



Saling: criteria

Czechs debate direct polls

PRAGUE, Dec 12 (Reuters) — Czechoslovakia's Parliament met today to debate a proposal for a direct presidential election to give voters a chance to choose a successor to President Gustav Husak, according to Federal Assembly sources.

The 350-member assembly is constitutionally required to elect a new president by Dec 24 to replace hardliner Husak who stepped down on Sunday.

A special poll would require a change in the constitution.

The assembly, acting in response to massive protests against one-party rule, voted unanimously on Nov 29 to delete article four of the constitution which guarantees a political monopoly to the Communist Party.

As the assembly met to discuss the proposal put forth by the Communist Party caucus dominating the Parliament, some 2,000 people rallied outside in support of the presidential candidacy of Václav Havel.

"From dissident to President in a year" read many banners carried by the crowd.

Havel, 53, is the leading figure of the pro-democracy Civic Forum opposition movement. He was released from prison in May after serving four months for his role in anti-government protests last January.

Thirteen headline members of the main presidium of the bicameral assembly, including ousted Communist Party chief Milos Jakes and former politburo members Josef Lenart, Alois Indra and Karel Hoffmann, resigned their posts at the start of a joint session.

Civic Forum spokesman Lubos Dobrovsky told a news conference that the movement backed Havel's candidacy, but was unhappy about a direct presidential election although at first it seemed "enticing."

"We don't want further changes in the constitution during this transitional period," he said, adding that the head of state should remain responsible to the Parliament.

Civic Forum said the main priority for the country was the preparation of free democratic elections to the assembly.

Party central committee secretary Ondrej Saling said the party had not committed itself to a single candidate, but several regional party meetings backing former Prime Minister Ladislav Adamcsek received major coverage in today's party daily Rude Pravo.

Le Pen, lacking immunity, faces criminal charges for Nazi pun

PARIS, Dec 12 (AP) — France's extreme-right activist Jean-Marie Le Pen faces criminal prosecution for a pun linking a French cabinet minister's name to Nazi death camp ovens, now that the European Parliament has lifted his immunity.

By a vote of 178-91, the 12-nation Parliament agreed yesterday to a request from the French Justice Ministry to allow the President of the National Front Party to be brought to court on charges of slandering a government minister.

The case stems from comments Le Pen made to a rally on Sept 2, 1988, referring sarcastically to Michel Duraufour, minister of the public service in the socialist government, as "duraufour-crematore," a play on the French word for crematory ovens.

An uproar followed, with Jewish organisations, civil rights groups and leading politicians denouncing Le Pen's statement.

As a member of the European Parliament, which sits in Strasbourg, France, Le Pen has immunity from prosecution unless the body votes to lift it.

If convicted of slandering a cabinet minister, an obscure section of French press law, Le Pen would face a jail term of six days to three months and a fine of up to 80,000 francs (\$13,000).

Gilbert Collard, lawyer for the group that originally filed charges against Le Pen, the movement against racism and for friendship among peoples, said today he would proposed that Le Pen be sentenced to a term of public service scrubbing racist graffiti from the walls of Paris subway stations.



Baker peers through a hole in the Berlin Wall. (Reuters wirephoto)

US helps Romania Uranium sale

WASHINGTON, Dec 12 (AP) — Despite criticism of Romania's policies, US officials say they will send weapons-grade uranium to the hard-line East bloc country as soon as it comes up with a suitable way to ship the material.

Opponents of the sale, which was approved in 1988, call it "crazy" and say Romania can't be trusted with the dangerous material. The 16.4 kilograms of uranium are slated to be used at the Triga research reactor near Bucharest.

"In light of the Romanians' increasing isolation and instability, this is not the time to be sending Romania the means to make an atomic bomb," said Gary Milbollen, director of the Wisconsin project on nuclear arms control, a group that opposes nuclear proliferation.

US officials have harshly criticised the policies of Romanian communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu, but they have not blocked the uranium sale.

"The exports of the ... fuel met all the requirements of the US Atomic Energy Act," the US State Department said in a statement. Romania has pledged "no nuclear explosive use" for its nuclear programme, it said.

"Appropriate physical security measures are being applied to the highly enriched uranium in Romania and will be applied to any additional nuclear material shipped to that country," the department said.

But a department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was a debate over whether to try to stop Romania from taking control of the uranium.

Relations between Bucharest and Washington have been "severely strained" recently by Romania's poor human rights record, the State Department said, adding that "we would like to see Romania join its neighbours in moving towards political and economic reforms."

E. Germany

Reds admit failure

EAST BERLIN, Dec 12 (AP) — East Germany's Communist Party newspaper said today that the country's socialist system has failed, and it expressed support for a closer relationship with West Germany.

The statement in the Communist Party newspaper Neues Deutschland was one of the bluntest official assessments to date of the country's increasingly troubled situation. "The governmental and administrative socialism has definitely failed as a social system in our country," Neues Deutschland said in proposing a new platform.

The newspaper acknowledged that the "popular revolutionary movement" of the past weeks had led to the scrapping of the old system. Neues Deutschland repeated the communists' promise to work for a new "democratic socialism" within a multi-party system.

During the last few weeks, both East Germany and West Germany have been saying they are interested in closer relations and nearly every day there are signs of growing ties in business, arts and other areas as well.

But both sides have engaged in a kind of verbal sparring match over what labels to use for their new relationship. East Berlin rejects calls for reunification.

Neues Deutschland called for a "qualified partnership of both German states as a joint contribution for the future construction of our European home."

The idea of a "common home" has been increasingly used to express the notion of European nations growing closer and more cohesive.

Neues Deutschland rejected any suggestion of resolving the "German question" as a merely national issue involving the two sides.

The issue of reunification appears to be splitting the East German opposition.

More than 200,000 East Germans rallied across the country yesterday, with shouting matches breaking out between supporters and opponents of German reunification in Leipzig and other cities.

The rallies came shortly after the four World War II allies who have control of Berlin met in West Berlin to discuss the latest developments in the Germanys.

The ambassadors of the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Britain, whose countries still technically have the final say over Berlin, met at the request of the Soviet Union.

The Soviets have increasingly expressed concern over calls for German reunification.

Vyacheslav Kochemasov, the Soviet official at the talks, urged the Western allies to respect "the political and territorial reality of Europe," according to a report by ADN.

ADN said Kochemasov, the Soviet ambassador to East Berlin, made the comments to the official Soviet news agency Tass.

"The Soviet Union, during the four power talks yesterday in West Berlin, strongly emphasized that respect for the territorial and political reality of Europe is essential," ADN said in reporting the Soviet ambassador's comments to Tass.



"Vocal" silent protest

A young Bulgarian woman holds up a candle during a quiet demonstration. With more peaceful demonstration in the next few days the Bulgarian popula-

tion wants to claim for more political reforms in their country. (Reuters wirephoto)

Reform now, Bulgaria told

Mladenov bends

SOFIA, Dec 12 (AP) — The Communist Party's policy-making central committee continued meeting today, with the push for reforms enlivened by party leader Petar Mladenov's call for free elections.

Mladenov, in a speech to the central committee yesterday, also said the party was prepared to relinquish its constitutionally guaranteed leading role and called for dialogue with opposition groups.

The central committee meeting came as popular pressure for reform mounts in the country. Thousands have taken to the streets in the last two days to demand that their country join the reform processes sweeping Eastern Europe.

Although Bulgaria has trailed the developments in most other East Bloc countries, Mladenov's proposals were notable in a country that until a month ago was one of the bloc's most solidly hardline.

Mladenov on Nov 10 replaced party chief Todor Zhivkov, who had been in power for 35 years.

As the central committee met yesterday, more than 10,000 people gathered outside party headquarters for a silent candlelight vigil to underline their demands for change. They planned to repeat the vigil twice today.

Evgeni Aleksandrov, a party spokesman, told a news conference he expected today's debate to be "interesting and dynamic," as dozens of people had asked to speak. The central committee must still approve Mladenov's proposals.

In his speech, parts of which were broadcast on national radio and television, Mladenov said "the party cannot be elected in a command and administrative way," referring to the party's leading role.

"In the past the party won the people with political methods, now it has to do so again," he said.

Aleksandrov said Mladenov proposed that the National Assembly, or Parliament, should schedule "free and democratic elections" not later than May of 1990.

He said dialogue should begin "between the Communist Party and all political forces without exceptions."

Asked when such dialogue could begin, Aleksandrov said "the political process of democratisation and the situation in the country won't wait. Dialogue will begin immediately, as soon as the sides interested in the welfare of the country are prepared to sit down and negotiate."

When asked if members of independent groups would be represented in the government, Aleksandrov said the new Parliament would elect a government it considered "best-suited" (in which) ... all walks of life will be represented.

On Sunday, some 50,000 people who rallied in downtown Sofia approved a resolution drafted by independent groups which called for talks between them and the party.

Mladenov also proposed that the new constitution be prepared by the new democratically elected Parliament, Aleksandrov said.

Mladenov also proposed that party leaders be limited to only two terms in office. According to the party's statutes, a term lasts four years.

He proposed that the term of the current leadership end at the next party congress.

In his 35 years of power, Zhivkov resisted reform and is blamed for leading the country into economic crisis.

Aleksandrov said Mladenov proposed that Parliament in January address the country's most urgent economic problems and discuss a concrete "stabilisation programme."

Baltics vote for radicals

TALLINN, Soviet Union, Dec 12 (Reuters) — Radical groups in Estonia and Latvia demanding a return to their Baltic republics pre-war independence looked set for substantial gains from last weekend's local elections.

Preliminary results yesterday in the Estonian capital, Tallinn, showed a 12-member radical alliance had picked up 18 of the 80 city council seats after preference votes were counted and was likely to win at least 40 when the final tally was calculated.

Among the 18 was a member of the environmentalist Greens party.

A complex preferential voting system means the full outcome will not be known for several days.

"It's too early to give final results, but it is certain there will be lots of new faces," said Henry Soova, a senior Communist Party official. The mayor of Tallinn was likely to be among those defeated, he added.

In neighbouring Latvia, television reports and projections said candidates backed by the radical Popular Front — whose official platform includes independence from Moscow — looked likely to clinch more than 60 per cent of the vote.

In the Latvian capital, Riga, Communist Party chief Arnolds Klauces faces a run-off within the next two weeks after failing to get a majority of votes cast, local journalists told Reuters.

In another Estonian city, Tartu, party members from the radical wing had won, according to preliminary results.

And in Latvia, although Popular Front candidates had won more than 60 per cent, many of them were also party members.

The whole issue is likely to come to a head early next year.

An Estonian party congress expected in March is considered likely to split with the Moscow party.

Similar sentiment is running through Latvian party ranks and a party congress in the third Baltic republic, Lithuania.

150/22/12

Walesa call for special powers

WARSAW, Dec 12, (AP): Solidarity leader Lech Walesa today urged granting special economic powers to the government to allow it to bypass Parliament and "quickly and with determination" restructure the economy.

It was not known if Walesa's proposal was supported by the Solidarity-led government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, which is drafting a package of economic reform legislation for presentation to the Sejm, or lower house of Parliament, this weekend.

The special powers would have to be authorised by Parliament.

"The situation in the country is getting worse. Time is running out. The reserve of social trust is nearly expired," Walesa said in a statement issued from Solidarity union headquarters in Gdansk.

Legislative debate is slowing down the adoption of laws necessary to solve the country's economic crisis, Walesa said.

The powers would apply to restructuring the economy, changing the property system, ending monopolies of state-run and co-operative enterprises, and reforming the tax and accounting system, banking and local government structures, Walesa said.

The Solidarity leader said he was "fully aware how controversial this proposal is. But I am forced to make it because of the ever worsening situation in the country and the growing impatience of society."

He said the powers should be set by Parliament for a specified period and for specific areas of activity. The Sejm and Senate could then work "quietly" on longer term laws, while retaining the right to correct acts of the government, he said.

One effect of such powers should be to lessen the influence of the Communist Party and its formerly allied parties in the Parliament in governing economic policy.

Mazowiecki's government is dominated by Solidarity, whose members hold 12 seats in the 24-member cabinet, while the communists have four.

In the Sejm, however, Solidarity has 35 per cent of the seats, with the communists holding 37 per cent.

Vatican negotiator

VATICAN CITY, Dec 12, (Reuters): Pope John Paul appointed an Australian archbishop and veteran diplomat today as his main negotiator with the Russian orthodox church over the thorny issue of Ukrainian Catholics.

Archbishop Edward Cassidy, 65, the Pope's deputy secretary of state for the past 17 months, was named to head the Vatican's Bureau for Christian Unity, a key position in Roman Catholic attempts to improve relations with the Orthodox church.

The Vatican said the Pope had accepted the resignation of Dutch Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, 80, a major church figure who headed the Christian Unity Department for 20 years.

In a reference to relations with the Orthodox church, Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the Pope had chosen Cassidy, who has held many diplomatic posts, "in view of future developments in ecumenical activity."

Former Soviet leader Josef Stalin suppressed the Ukrainian Catholics, in 1946.

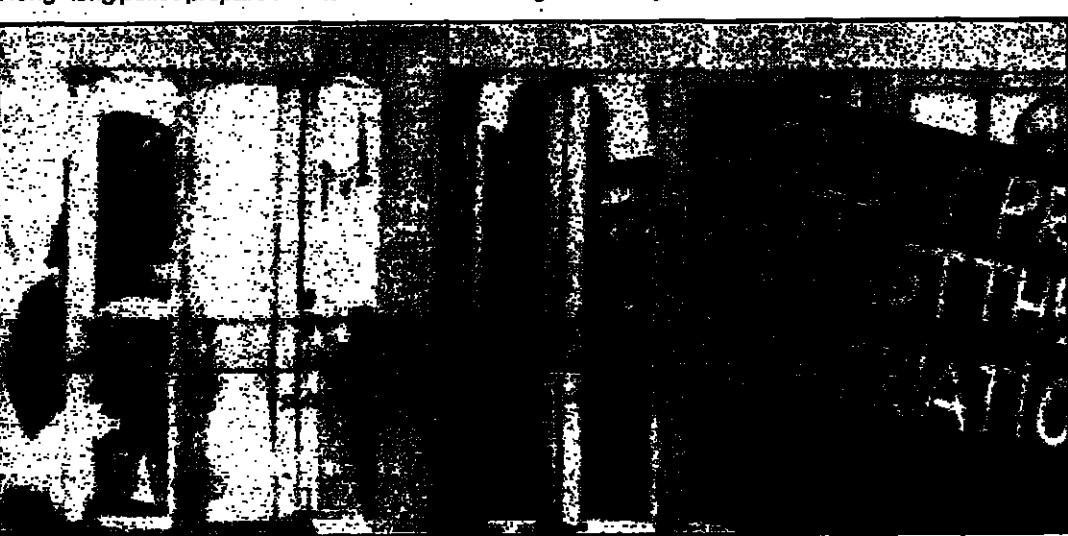
Boat people repatriation begins



A Vietnamese refugee (wearing headband) is assisted by a corrections department official as he leaves Phoenix House detention centre in Hong Kong.



Hong Kong police prepare to enter a Vietnamese refugees holding centre with riot gear to collect refugees.



A Vietnamese woman cries at the window of the Phoenix House detention centre in Hong Kong as an official (centre) talks to another refugee before leaving for airport. (Reuters wirephoto)

Bouquets and brickbats for Hong Kong

HONG KONG, Dec 12, (Reuters): Hong Kong's decision to send Vietnamese boat people home against their will has been both hotly condemned and defended.

In the early hours today Hong Kong flew an initial group of 51 men, women and children many weeping, back to Hanoi, apparently without using physical force.

Three quarters of the 57,000 boat people in the British colony's overcrowded camps are now potential candidates for mandatory repatriation.

While Britain's opposition parties lashed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for what Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown condemned as "an act of indecible shame," criticism in Hong Kong was more muted.

UK defends repatriation

Return of 40,000 to be negotiated

(Continued from Page 1)

was "not something any of us is enjoying," but added, "we have undertaken from the Vietnamese government that these people will not be punished or victimised in any way."

The United States today urged Britain to halt the forcible repatriation of Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong, an action President George Bush's spokesman described as unacceptable.

State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington regretted the British decision to repatriate the refugees.

"We believe British authorities should continue to grant asylum to all those persons from Vietnam who seek it in accordance with the comprehensive plan of action adopted in Geneva in June by the United States, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, the Asian (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries and others," Boucher told reporters.

"The United States deeply regrets the forcible repatriation of Vietnamese asylum seekers from Hong Kong to Vietnam," Boucher said.

"We believe the British government should not proceed further with mandatory repatriation from Hong Kong," he added.

Police in the British colony broke months of deadlock over the boat people when they put the 51 men, women and children aboard a chartered airliner which flew them to Hanoi. They had been classified as illegal immigrants after screening by immigration officials.

Human rights campaigners were angered by the circumstances of the operation, conducted in darkness by police in riot gear who outnumbered the weeping deportees.

Allegations that the police were armed were denied by Thatcher, who was accused by opposition of being tyrannical in her attitude.

Thatcher said the influx of Vietnamese who were economic rather than political refugees had

caused great suffering to the Chinese population of Hong Kong.

Hurd stressed that the repatriation had been carried out "in line with international procedures used world-wide ... no force was used."

Only 600 illegal Vietnamese immigrants had gone home voluntarily in the last year while 30,000 had arrived in Hong Kong during the same period.

Voluntary return alone will not match the scale of the problem," Hurd added.

He said Britain believed Hong Kong faced the prospect of receiving tens of thousands of illegal Vietnamese immigrants during the 1990s unless they were convinced that they would be turned back.

The government resisted strong American pressure including an appeal to Thatcher from US Secretary of State James Baker yesterday not to begin enforced repatriations.

Hurd said Britain would open talks with Vietnam for the "swift and safe return" of the remaining illegal immigrants.

He told parliament: "The international community has said it will not resettle these people." He added: "If they are not returned to Vietnam, they would face the prospect of indefinite detention in Hong Kong."

The government said there would be no more deportations until a debate in parliament next Tuesday when its policy is expected to be assailed again by the opposition.

Amnesty International spokesman Robert Roach said: "The whole idea of using the detention on asylum-seekers as a deterrent to other asylum-seekers is fundamentally abhorrent."

The Labour Party has described the enforced repatriations as "a terrible violation" and the small Liberal Democratic Party described them as "an act of indecible shame."

In Aberdeen, Scotland, Roman Catholic priest Father James Birrell said he would start a hunger strike from noon on Wednesday which would last until the government reversed its decision.



Rights week

President Bush proclaimed this week as "human rights week." In the proclamation, Bush also set aside Dec 15 as the "Bill of rights day" and cited the guarantees it provides for freedom of speech, of the press, of religion and association.

Speaking of the safeguarding of individual liberty and fundamental human rights, Bush said: "Our commitment to this obligation is unflagging. So, this week, as we give thanks for the freedom we enjoy as Americans, let us also renew our determination to value and protect the rights of others."

Bush defends visit to Beijing

WASHINGTON, Dec 12, (Agencies): President George Bush has defended his decision to send two top aides to Beijing over the weekend, and he said he would "keep looking for ways to find common ground" with Chinese leaders.

Bush stressed that the trip by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and a top State Department aide did not amount to normalisation of relations. He said those who suggest otherwise "simply do not know what they are talking about."

Bush, who has been criticised by a majority opposition Democrats in Congress for sending the two senior advisers to China, said he took the action because:

"The President made his comments to a group of editorial writers gathered in an auditorium across the street from the White House."

He opened the session with a review of his first year as President. Citing an improved US-Soviet relationship and other developments, he said, "I'm not overly satisfied but I think generally the first year has gone pretty well."

As for China, Bush said he was "very pleased today in the wake of General Scowcroft's visit to notice that the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that they would not sell missiles to any Mideast countries."

He added that Scowcroft had raised the issue in his weekend talks with Chinese leaders, and the Chinese made their announcement before the national security adviser and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger had returned to Washington.

Bush called the Chinese statement "a very sound development," although he had received the same assurances during a trip to China last February.

Even as Bush spoke, congressional Democrats stepped up their criticism of his actions. Senate majority leader George Mitchell condemned the US overture as "embarrassing kowtowing to the Chinese government."

"The administration supports human rights in its words. It does not do so in its deeds.... These actions make a mockery of our profession of concern for human rights and are inconsistent with our stated ideals," Mitchell said.

Bush said he had sent his top aides to Beijing to discuss the results of the recent US-Soviet summit off Malta with the Chinese leaders.

"I do not want to isolate the Chinese people. I don't want to hurt the Chinese people," he said.

"I realise the difficulty of this relationship but I don't want to make it any worse," he said, referring to the strains following the suppression of the pro-democracy movement.

He said he was "going to keep looking for ways to find common ground" with China.

The President made no mention of Fang Lizhi, the prominent Chinese dissident who has been given sanctuary from Chinese authorities in the American embassy in Beijing.

Bush's Press Secretary, Martin Fitzwater, indicated he was unhappy that the Scowcroft-Eagleburger visit had been portrayed in the Chinese press as evidence of US-Chinese reconciliation. "I probably would have dictated a little different coverage," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bing Crosby's son dies at 51: Lindsay Crosby, son of the late entertainer Bing Crosby, has been found dead in his suburban home.

The 51-year-old Crosby, found Monday afternoon, apparently shot himself in the head, authorities said. An autopsy was scheduled for Tuesday.

A friend discovered the body on a bedroom floor in the home in Calabasas, a small-caliber rifle was found nearby, said Los Angeles county Sheriff's deputy Bill Linnemeyer.

Lindsay Crosby was youngest of four sons of Bing and Dixie Lee Crosby, who died of cancer in 1952. Bing Crosby died at 73 of a heart attack in 1977.

Taiwanese dissident indicted: Leading dissident Hsu Hsin-Liang has been indicted on charges of entering Taiwan illegally, court officials reported today.

Taipei district court prosecutor Lin Tien-Ling said in a statement that Hsu, former publisher of the now defunct dissident magazine Formosa monthly, returned to Taiwan in September without an entry permit.

If convicted, Hsu could be sentenced to three years in prison, Lin said. (AP)

Benin bans demonstrations: The government has outlawed public demonstrations and warned that police have been given orders to use force if necessary to enforce the ban.

The ban was announced by radio last evening following a march by an estimated 40,000 demonstrators calling for President Mathieu Kerekou's resignation. The march took place in Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin.

There were reports of violence and one death at similar demonstrations in Ouidah, Abomey and the capital city of Porto Novo. (AP)

15 killed in train derailment: At least 15 people were killed and 100 injured in a train accident in eastern Bulgaria today state radio reported.

The report came only hours after the accident happened; in the past, at least a day passed before state media reported on such accidents.

According to the radio report, the engine and three cars of a passenger train travelling from Sofia to the port city of Varna were derailed. (AP)

Political prisoners released: Thirteen political prisoners have been released and the sentences of all other political detainees reduced by one year, the official radio Mauritania announced.

Those released include 12 black Mauritians and the chief of the pro-Iraqi Baath Party, Mohamed Yehdi Ould Breidjel, the radio reported last night. (AP)

Hong Kong to ban: Members of a Hong Kong-China committee agreed today to ban political organisations with foreign links in Hong Kong after it returns to Chinese rule in 1997, local press reports said.

The reports said the committee drafting the post-1997 constitution for Hong Kong agreed on the proposal at a meeting in the southern Chinese city of Canton. (AP)

Japan to honour Shultz: Former US Secretary of State George Shultz will receive a Japanese decoration during his four-day visit to Japan tomorrow, it was officially announced in Tokyo today.

It is expected that Shultz will receive the decoration from Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu when they meet tomorrow. (Kuna)

Feudal system in Japan politics

Deputies name sons as successors

TOKYO, Dec 12, (Reuters): Japan's feudal system is alive and well — especially in politics.

Until the mid-19th century, sovereignty over local fiefdoms was handed down from Samurai rulers to their sons.

In the contemporary version of hereditary rule, many members of Japan's Parliament now designate their sons or close relatives as successors when they retire.

The feat is not only sources of political funds but the politician's network of supporters, which plays a vital role as a ballot-collecting machine.

One aim of introducing democracy to Japan after World War Two was to give everyone an equal chance to climb the ladder of success, said Jiro Kamishima of Tokyo's Ritsso University, an expert on modern political thought.

"But in reality... a leadership class has been emerging," Kamishima said.

The handing down of political constituencies to relatives is widespread, especially among lower house members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

About 40 per cent, or 117 of the LDP's 296 lower house members are second- or third-generation parliamentarians. The lower chamber has 512 members.

Only about 12 legislators from the opposition parties hold inherited constituencies.

"A class of politicians is shaping up," said politics expert Takashi Inoguchi of Tokyo University. "No doubt it is gradually becoming what looks like Samurai lords in feudal Japan."

Seven of Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu's 22 cabinet members are second-generation legislators, including Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama.

More constituencies will be passed on in the next lower house election, expected in February.

Of some 20 senior LDP lawmakers who have announced they will retire at the end of the current term, 11 have marked their sons or close relatives as successors.

They include former Prime Ministers Takeo Fukuda, 84, and Zenko Suzuki, 78, whose supporters have already endorsed their eldest sons as the next candidates.

Feudal succession has also been adopted by medical doctors, said political analyst Kaoru Okano at Meiji University.

"Like medical doctors who have to invest a lot of money to own a hospital, politicians need huge funds to be elected to parliament and it is impossible for them to recover all their investments during their political careers," Okano said.

"Feudal lords were succeeded by their descendants because of authority, while present-day parliamentarians inherit power mainly through considerations of money."

Montreal mourns victims

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and thousands of others mourned at Notre Dame Cathedral yesterday for the 14 victims of the worst mass murder ever in Canada, women "brutally mowed down in the beauty of their youth."

Monsignor Paul Gregoire, the city's Roman Catholic Archbishop, presided at the joint funeral mass for nine victims of a gunman's rampage at the University of Montreal engineering school. Families of the other five victims chose private services.

Gregoire noted that the women, almost all students, were killed "at a time when everything seemed to assure them of a brilliant future" and urged that in their memory "we should seek to build a world of solidarity, a world of friendship."

Schools and universities throughout Quebec province observed a minute of silence as the mass started at 10:30 am (1530 GMT).

Left: A grieving woman is consoled during the funeral service. Right: Four caskets led to the altar where priests performed the high requiem mass.

Roland Dore, the school's president and principal, also called for survivors "to build a world of tomorrow, a world where every one of us, men and women, contributes equally."

A gunman identified by police as Marc Lepine, 25, killed the women in a rampage through three of the engineering school's six floors last Wednesday before shooting himself to death with his rifle.

Thirteen of those who died were students, the other was a school employee. All were between the ages of 21 and 31. The gunman also wounded nine women and four men. Their condition was reported yesterday to be improving. (Reuters wirephoto)

Municipal committee endorses frontier towns: report

Contractors strictly supervised

A REPORT on the construction of frontier towns within the areas of Abdali and Salmi submitted by Fahd Al Hasawi, chief engineer of Kuwait Municipality has been endorsed by the Municipal Affairs Committee.

The report identified initial plans for building the proposed frontier town and defined sites and areas of the project.

The committee's endorsement stressed the need for co-ordination with relevant authorities regarding the distance these towns would have to be located from the frontier lines. Further it also requested determining the feasibility of relocating the proposed industrial area within the proposed frontier town to be located to the

east of the main Abdali Road, and the industrial area for Salmi frontier town to be located to the south of the main Salmi road.

All facilities proposed for relocation should be clearly reported and submitted to the committee for making provisions for cleanliness of the residential towns.

Maintenance
Meanwhile, the director of maintenance department at the Public Works Ministry Eid Al Khalidi has said that his department is responsible for maintaining public roads and squares, maintaining the buildings of state establishments and ministries, maintaining the main roads and flyovers, paving the roads, marking the

streets, paving temporary roads for farms at Abdali and Wafra, installing and maintaining the guiding boards at the roads and maintaining of pavements.

Khalidi pointed out that the nature of maintenance projects carried out by the department makes it difficult to carry out the job without facing problems. "We are working in crowded places and public roads so these projects cannot be carried out without the co-operation of the other relevant authorities," the official explained.

Supervision
The maintenance department takes strict procedures against companies that do not carry out their work according to

the specified conditions. The department's engineers continually supervise the work of contractors and extend their every assistance and further acts as a catalyst between national companies and contractors, the official said.

The Ministry of Public Works began work to develop its administrative staff after making studies that lasted for two years and have resulted in the expansion of activities and responsibilities of the ministry. According to these studies priorities have been allocated, jobs evenly delegated and new expertise incorporated to streamline operational functions of the different departments of the ministry, Khalidi said.

Ministers to discuss maids at next meet

THE Council of Ministers will reportedly discuss in its next session a number of proposals on the phenomenon of maids in the country, and their related social repercussions.

Sources close to the council have disclosed that some of these proposals deal with the need to reduce the number of maid recruiting offices, particularly unauthorised ones. In the latter, owners employed crooked techniques in running their unlawful businesses, which had resulted in a leap in the number of these offices to over 200.

The sources pointed out that a law in the pipeline to regulate the operation of these offices, whereby the business would have to be controlled by the Ministries of Interior, Commerce and Industry and Social Affairs and Labour.

Recommendations

The sources added that the Council would discuss recommendations on how to reduce the number of the maids employed by one family. These would include the imposition of duties on those wishing to make use of more than one maid, besides exploring the financial situation of the family, wishing to hire household help, to prevent potential financial problems.

Sources also said that the maid problems received top-level concern amidst reports that the number of housemaids currently in employment reached 152,000, 80 per cent of whom operated in homes which constituted a grave jeopardy on the young.

Sources said that a special committee would be formed from ministries to carry out intensive studies on the reasons leading to the increasing reliance on hired househelp, and undertake to raise public awareness on the grave consequences of dependence on maids.



All receives Egyptian envoy

The Governor of Jahra Sheikh Ali Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah received in his office yesterday Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Saeed Mahmoud Refaat.

Talks during the meeting centred on issues of common concern.

Students bemoan problems at Technical Studies College

A NUMBER of students at the Technical Studies College have complained that they are faced with several problems within the premises of the college and added that the authorities seem to be totally unaware of these issues.

Interviewed by a local daily, one of the students said that the college buildings are old and could collapse at any time, meals provided at the college cafeteria are substandard and instruments in the laboratories are obsolete.

Language

Specially, they stressed on the registration process and commented that influence is a pre-requisite in gaining admission. Additionally, due to the exclusive reliance on English as the first language, the students said that they face difficulties in comprehending curricula texts.

Students added that they were totally surprised with the decision to cancel social assistance of new students and to cancel English language level tests for admission to the current academic year.

Wadhah Mousa said the new students attend lectures in premises that lack air-conditioning and have uncomfortable seats and desks. He added that the Technical Studies College does not provide

students with recreational and social services on campus.

Mutlaq Mnyaser Al Ajmi indicated that the general secondary graduates levels in English is at most times very poor. He proposed that newly admitted students should be offered more intensive English classes to improve their abilities. He explained that some of the courses for which he registered during the current academic term have no teachers as yet.

Social allowance

Mubarak Al Fajri pointed out that the main problem encountered by most students at the authority is not being able to work. The issue becomes vital when viewed in the light that the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has currently cancelled social allowances and assistance to new students.

He proposed that students should be given the opportunity to work on their own time and added that he hoped that the English level tests would be re-implemented again at the college. He also commented that students car parking lots are far away from the college campus and lecture halls and there is a shortage in the number of parking spaces. Additionally, there is lack of transportation facilities from the authority housing to the college campus, Fajri said.

Salmiya murderer gets death sentence

KUWAIT'S Higher Court of Appeals has enhanced the sentence issued by the Criminal Court against an accused from life imprisonment to death.

The accused identified as a teacher Samir J was convicted of murdering Sanaa M and her child Wael N (six years old) and setting fire to their flat in a bid to conceal the crime.

The episode which unfolded in the Salmiya Area at the end of February 1988, surprised the people of Kuwait because of the nature of the crime.

The court was told that the accused was a friend of the victim's husband and on the day of the crime, the accused had left the place of work in the morning and went to the victim's flat.

The woman opened the door and asked the accused to sit in the hall. However, he followed her and tried to sexually assault her. The woman put up a valiant fight which caused the accused to rush to the kitchen and bring out a knife with which he repeatedly stabbed the woman until she died.

Stabbing

The frantic cries of the dying woman woke up the child who was sleeping on the bed. As the child began to cry when he saw the criminal slaughter his mother, the accused stabbed him to death.

Not satisfied with his double murder, the criminal then undressed the woman and sexually assaulted her. Then he systematically began to set fire to the flat to conceal the crime.

However, firemen succeeded in extinguishing the fire before total evidence was destroyed.

Examination

The criminal denied the charge and said that though he left his place at the time of the crime, it was insufficient to commit the crime described. However, the medical examiner and the CID examinations indicated that traces found on the body of the woman could have been made by the accused. The blood group examination of the husband and the blood group of the accused were examined against the traces found on the woman. The blood group of the accused matched, according to medical reports.

The Criminal Court had sentenced the 37-year-old teacher to life sentence based on the crime not being premeditated. But, the prosecution appealed the sentence and called for the death penalty.

The Court of Higher Appeals based its judgement on the accused's act being without any mercy, a double murder, satisfying animal passion after murdering his victim and for murdering an innocent child.

The sentence will be final if it is upheld by the Cassation Court.

Indian exam

A PRESS release from the Indian Embassy in Kuwait has stated that the M.A. (Public Administration) Third Semester Examination of Punjab University will be held at Indian Embassy premises with effect from 18th Dec 1989 at 11.30 hrs. Concerned candidates are advised to contact the embassy well in time.

Incorrigible offenders deported, says Hajji

Higher traffic council to be formed

MANY expatriates have been deported from Kuwait for committing more than three serious traffic violations such as speeding and reckless driving, passing the red light and transporting passengers in private cars in exchange for money.

Speaking on this issue, Brigadier Abdul Hameed Al Hajji, director-general of the General Traffic Administration (GTA) explained that the GTA also takes serious cognisance of violations committed by citizens and imposes strict penalties for similar offences.

Hajji said that the Higher Traffic Council will be formed at the earliest opportunity and will then be responsible for all issues relating to traffic in the country.

Amendments to the traffic law are still being studied by relevant authorities, and recommendations will be submitted to the Council of Ministers, the official said.

The opening of driving schools in future is intended to facilitate a larger number of exceptional categories, benefitting from istimara, Hajji said.

Hajji disclosed that those who have their istimara for a period of over three years, or have failed in their driving tests several times, will have their istimaras cancelled. He clarified that those falling in the category of exempted persons should apply for new istimaras.

He added that renewal of driving licences of expatriates will be in accordance with the period of

validity of their residence permits.

Hajji pointed out that the GTA began the implementation of traffic notification systems through the postal service. The new service aims at notifying citizens and expatriates about expiry dates of their car books. Renewal can be also done through the postal service, he said.

In this respect, the GTA has begun an experiment of the service by selecting a sample of 20,000 citizens and expatriates living in different housing areas. Local insurance officials have agreed to extend their co-operation to facilitate these procedures, Hajji said.

Postal notices
The service will also include the renewal of the driving licences and these services will be carried out in co-operation with the computer centre of the ministry. The streamlining of these services is intended to reduce pressure on the traffic department and save time and efforts of citizens and expatriates.

Hajji said that notifications and letters mailed by the GTA not reaching addresses will be returned to the GTA after a period of two weeks from being mailed. The notifications will then be sent again to the respective work addresses of individuals.

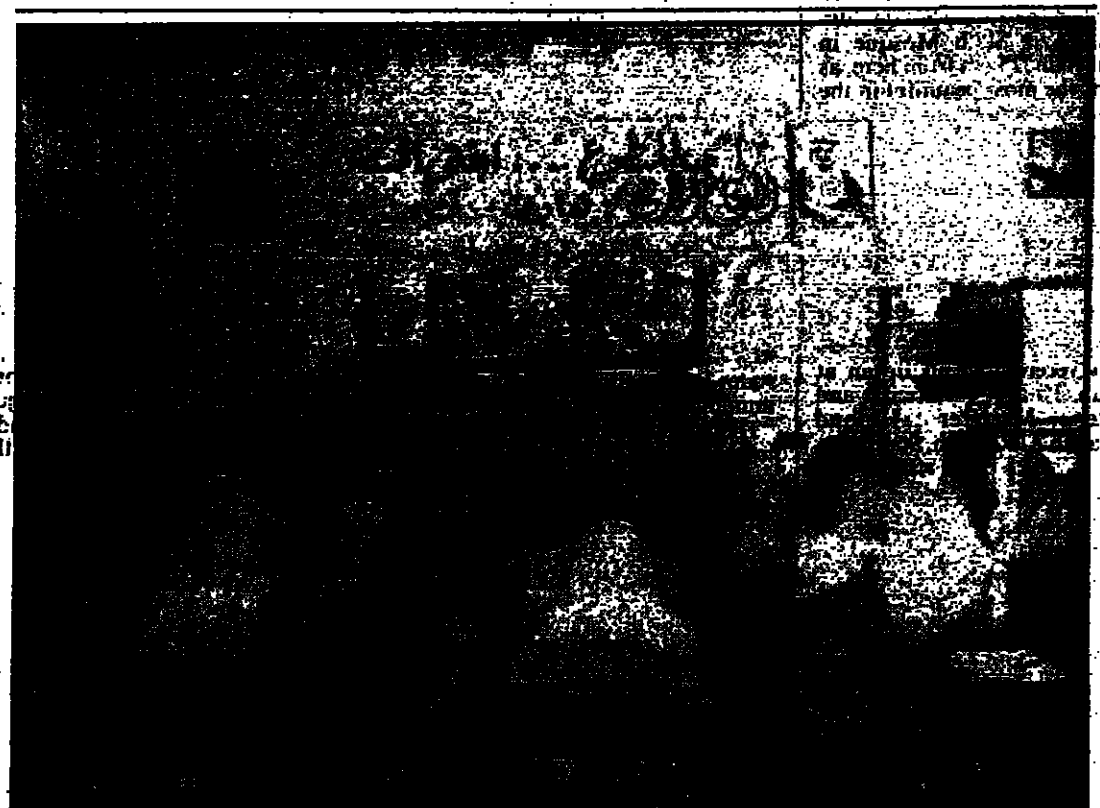
The GTA will notify owners of cars about the expiry date of their car books. However, if the car is out of Kuwait and the book expires during this period, the

plate number of the car will be cancelled. This will be applicable to expatriates. Citizens, however, who have their car books expired while they are out of the country will receive notifications abroad by mail, he said.

The municipality has contracted with a contracting company to study the project of the control of traffic signals and to submit their recommendations. The first stage of the project is expected to begin by the mid of the coming year, Hajji said.

He added that the Ministry of Public Works is the body that is responsible for determining places of traffic signals at roads and disclosed that the signals presently fixed at roads of Kuwait City are temporary. These will be replaced on completion of the project on the Ring Road and Soor Road, he said.

Hajji pointed out that the GTA will open a branch at the Ministries Complex to renew the car books and pay fines for violations committed by employees working in the complex. Further, a branch is intended to be opened inside the Second Hand Car Market (Haraj) to transfer ownership of cars and renew the car books. The branches will be opened sometime during February of next year. The GTA is studying with the Computer Centre the feasibility of issuing a new form of car book that is smaller than the present one and so be similar to the driving licence.



Female volunteers meet Qaood

General Director of the General Civil Defence Department, Col Khaled Rashed Al Qaood held a meeting with female civil defence volunteers during which he welcomed them and stressed that Ministry of Interior's keenness towards bringing success to this course. He praised their high response of Kuwaiti females towards joining Civil Defence training courses.

He indicated that a special plan was designed by the Training Department which includes all educational stages in order to enlighten volunteers with the precaution which should be taken at all circumstances including war situations.

Gulf Unix conference

THE Arabian Gulf UNIX Users Group is pleased to announce the First Annual Arabian Gulf UNIX Conference which will take place on Dec 18-20, 1989, at the Kuwait Regency Palace, Kuwait.

The Conference will be the first of its kind in the region dedicated solely to UNIX technology. It will serve as the first official inauguration of UNIX in the Arab World and the launching pad for UNIX in the 1990's.

The event will focus on UNIX systems and solutions in the Arab World for the 1990's. It will feature exhibits from major UNIX software and hardware vendors, UNIX conferences led by speakers from well-known multinational corporations and UNIX tutorials and primers presented by leading experts in the field.

GCC system flexible, says Amir of Qatar

DOHA, Dec 12, (Kuna): Amir of Qatar Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani in a press conference with an Egyptian press delegation last night said that the Gulf Co-operation Council had accomplished a lot of achievements.

Sheikh Khalifa said that the GCC system is flexible and allows each country to progress without imposing anything, asserting that all issues are approved with understanding and co-operation. The Amir said in the press conference that was carried today by Qatari News Agency, that the GCC Summit, scheduled for December 18 in Muscat will further progress the GCC march.

He acknowledged that his country had faced the same economic recession affecting many other countries, but it was able to overcome those circumstances and improve its economic performance.

In the upcoming five years, Sheikh Khalifa pointed out, Qatar will enjoy three major sources of national income namely oil, liquefied gas and heavy industries depending on oil and gas.

He expressed satisfaction over the return of Egypt into the Arab fold in a meeting with Egyptian delegation which grouped chief editors and board chairmen of national and partisan papers and magazines. The Amir said that he will discuss with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, during his forthcoming visit to Cairo, co-operation between the two countries, underlining that their bilateral co-operation was deeply rooted in all fields.

Growth

On the current Iraq-Iran situation, Sheikh Khalifa said that the two countries do not wish to resume warring and cited as evidence that they are concentrating efforts on domestic economic growth.

He hoped that current efforts to push forward the peace process between the two countries would succeed.

On the uprising, he said that Qatar "supported and will support the Palestinian Intifada," hoping that Arab and international efforts would succeed in achieving peace in the Middle East and that the Palestinian people would restore their legitimate rights including establishments of an independent state.

He lauded the Arab Tripartite Committee's efforts in settling the Lebanese question, affirming that it was still pursuing its mission to eliminate any obstacles hindering Lebanon's unity.

Establishment of the Arab Co-operation Council and the Arab Maghreb Union was a satisfactory accomplishment for the Arab nation, since they complemented the GCC within framework of the Arab league.

Asked on the Arab support to Africa, he said that the Arab Gulf countries, in particular, did not spare any effort in this respect, revealing that his country will increase its assistance to Africa.

BAHRAIN DIGEST

Autumn Fair a grand success

BAHRAIN'S Autumn Fair, one of the major popular events held every year in the island, has proved to be a resounding success in view of the record number of visitors as well as exhibitors.

According to the organisers, Arabian Exhibition Management (AEM), the eleven day fair which was just concluded lived up to the expectations of all concerned by attracting more than 100,000 visitors and bettering last year's attendance.

The event staged at the Exhibition Centre proved to be a popular venue for a large number of nationals, expatriates as well as visitors from other Gulf states since it commenced on Nov 30. More than 200 local companies participated in the Autumn Fair '89 offering reduced prices on most goods on display and sale. An extensive range of household appliances, textiles, foodstuffs, electronic goods, books and other services were available among a host of interesting items at sale prices.

Entertainment

The fair lived up to its aim of focusing particularly on the concept of family entertainment by offering a number of vintage entertainment programme featuring music and dance depicting different nationalities and cultures.

Performers included Country and Western music groups, Arabic artists and a popular Egyptian folklore troupe flown in especially for the event. Competitions for children were also organised on a large scale including a disco dancing competition, a talent competition and a funny face contest for toddlers.

The success of the fair was also possible because of the cancellation of the annual show which was originally scheduled to take place about the same time as the Autumn Fair. Traders capitalised on this good fortune by offering considerable bargain offers on a variety of goods.

Radio Bahrain, the island's English language radio station, sustained the keen interest in the fair, by broadcasting live commentary including random interviews with both visitors and traders everyday during the duration of the event.

Meanwhile, a local name was chosen for the mascot of the fair, a bear. The bear which proved a popular figure particularly among children was named 'Dabdeeb Al Habeeb', 'the happy bear'. The name was suggested by a national, Ahmed Abdul Asheer Hussain, who received \$D100 for the winning name.

The Car and Boat Show coincided with the Autumn Fair '89. Although the vintage car display did not enjoy the success as the fair, it attracted admirers of quality cars and boats.

Public suggestions welcome: Madhahka

CHAIRMAN of the Capital Governorate Council, Abdul Rahman Al Madhahka has said that the establishment of governorate councils shows the great concern paid by the government towards projects and construction. He indicated that governorate council may expand its authority and develop to become the right arm to establishments and ministries.

Interviewed by a local daily, he said that members of the Capital Governorate Council are scattered at area "Diwanias" to hear residents' complaints. He urged citizens to co-operate and to come forward with suggestions and proposals. He said that the council at least requires a six months period to begin effective plans after conducting the necessary studies.

He indicated that the Capital Governorate Council has already held three meetings during the last month. The first meeting was held upon the

invitation of the Capital Governor, Sheikh Jaber Al Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah to get acquainted with council members. A special committee was formed to review the formation of other committees. During the second meeting, the committee presented its suggestions in addition to other proposals put forward by some council members.

Also a number of complaints were received from Capital residents. He added that four committees were formed during the third meeting namely, the educational and social affairs committee, the planning and studies committee, the complaints and general services committee and the environment and public utilities protection committee. He pointed out that a special office was established at the council general secretariat to receive citizens' complaints. He stressed that the governor office is also open to directly receive all complaints and proposals.

Lufthansa launches new service to Pakistan

LUFTHANSA German Airlines launched a new service to Pakistan from Bahrain with two non-stop flights every week to Karachi last week.

Speaking at a press conference at the Sheraton hotel, John Nielson, the airline's district manager, commented that Lufthansa views Pakistan as a new market which has excellent prospects of growth for both sides. The new direct flights will provide an opportunity to the large number of Pakistani expatriates in Bahrain's different choice with a high quality product, he said.

The non-stop flight to Karachi is Lufthansa's only direct flight to any destination from Bahrain after Frankfurt.

Rais Khan, outgoing sales manager of Lufthansa who is being transferred to Karachi after 5 years in the island, said that passen-

gers, particularly Pakistani businessmen may also avail of a circle fare which is also under offer and includes Bahrain-Karachi-Frankfurt-Bahrain sector. This package he added may be particularly beneficial to those who may wish to combine a vacation cum business trip in this sector.

Lufthansa's new direct flights to Karachi from Bahrain are operational on Wednesdays and Thursdays. According to Nielson the fares for Lufthansa's 3-class service to Karachi will remain the same as other major competitors in the island. The German airline is operating Airbus 310s on this new sector. About 100 seating capacity will be available extra for passengers both ways on this market.

Meanwhile, Lufthansa, according to its district manager survived the 'bad times' of the last few years here which saw a major

price-war and recession, and enjoyed a very satisfactory performance in 1989.

Lufthansa has four 'independent' markets in the Gulf via a vis Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Lufthansa currently operates to about 170 destinations world-wide. It has recently acquired the services of the 'Super Jumbo' B747-400s.

Meanwhile speaking about the future development, Nielson commented that in view of rapid course of events in Germany and the forthcoming single European market in 1992, Lufthansa is expected to considerably expand its European as well as its domestic network.

Talking to Arab Times, Nielson said should the German reunification take place this century, Lufthansa will inevitably be merged with the East German carrier.

Sharp drop in new visas issued

Only 3698 work permits in November

THE number of work permits issued last month dropped very sharply compared to the previous month. The monthly statistics of the public relation department of the Interior Ministry said that only 3,698 work permits have been issued during the month of November by all four immigration departments of the various governorates. In October, as many as 10,282 work permits were issued. The main cause of the drop is attributed to a big drop in the number of work permits issued to maids during November. Maids in October got

over 8,000 work permits, totalling over 80 per cent of the work permits issued during that month.

However, in November slightly more than 3,000 work permits have been issued to maids. Similarly, work permits issued to employees in the private sector also sharply dropped to about 25 per cent of the number issued in October. A total of 1,613 work permits for private sector labourers were issued during October while only 411 were issued during November.

Issuance of visit visas also sharply drop-

ped in November compared to October. In November, only 5,523 visit visas were issued while 10,679 visit visas were issued in October. The main cause for this drop is attributed to a sharp drop in businessmen visas from 7,600 in October to only 2,694 in November. At the same time, the number of family visit visas slightly increased from 2,525 in October to 2,697 in November. In all, 5,523 visit visas were issued during the month of November which also included 114 government visit visas and 18 visas for medical treatment.

The four immigration departments in the country issued last month 11,838 new residences, almost similar to the previous month. But 7,103 residences were cancelled during the same month. The departments also renewed 28,584 residences and issued 632 temporary residences. Sponsorships of 5,589 persons were transferred during the last month, while the departments opened 1,113 files for new sponsors. The Immigration Departments also issued 1,033 permits allowing expatriates to stay over six months outside Kuwait.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New envoys

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): HH the Amir will receive at 11 am tomorrow at Bayan Palace credentials of the ambassadors of Bhutan and Niger to Kuwait.

Forged ties

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 12, (Kuna): HH the Amir of Kuwait hopes close ties can be forged between his country and Malaysia, and the Selangor state in particular, the Sultan of Selangor said today.

HH the Amir also praised Selangor for its staunch practice of Islam and the building of many mosques for the faithful, said the Sultan, who made a four-day visit to Kuwait which ended Sunday.

The Sultan and his consort, Tengku Ampuan, returned here today after the visit and a short holiday in Lybdon.

The Sultan told newsmen on arrival that HH the Amir had described the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque in Shah Alam, 25 km from here, as one of the most beautiful in the world.

The state mosque known as "the Blue Mosque" was built at the cost of \$60 million in March last year.

Premier receives

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah today received in his diwan at Bayan Palace Electricity and Water Minister Ahmad Al Rqobah, State Minister for Services Affairs Issa Mohammad Al Mazidi, and the advisor at HH the Amir's office Mohammad Sulaiman Syed Ali.

HH also received the Hawalli Governor Abdul Latif Mohammed Al Barjas, chairman of Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources Sheikh Ibrahim Al Duaij and Major-General Mohammad Abdulaziz Al Bader.

Information minister

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): Information Minister Sheikh Jaber Al Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah today received in his office the chairman of Ahmad's governorate council, Ali Fahed Al Adwani and the council's members Mubarak Rasal Al Fahmas Al Azmi, Hmoud Hammad Al Rashid, Fadhel Khalifa Al Daboo, and Salah Al Jeri.

Sheikh Jaber later received George Ibrahim Al Khouri, editor-in-chief of Ashabka magazine which is published in Lebanese "Dar Al Sayyad" publishing house.

Khalaf received

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah yesterday received at his diwan in Bayan Palace member of the central committee of the Palestinian national liberation movement (Fatah) Salah Khalaf "Abu Ayad."

Anglican archbishop

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah today received at his diwan in Bayan Palace the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Cyprus and the Gulf John Brown.

Interior visit

GCC airport officials currently visiting the country, paid a visit yesterday to the Computer Centre of the Ministry of Interior, the public relations department of the ministry reported.

The delegation was received at the centre by the director-general, Abdulkareem Jaafar who explained the role and tasks of the centre and who explained to the delegation the co-ordination between the centre and the ministry's various departments.

The delegation later visited the special forces camp to witness a practical training.



Farwaniya exchange inspected

Communications Minister Abdullah Al Sharhan yesterday inspected the Farwaniya telephone exchange after its expansion. 10,000 lines were added to the exchange during the project. Undersecretary of the ministry and other senior officials accompanied the minister on his tour.

Unicef report

Smallpox immunisation in Gulf almost realised

RIYADH, Dec 12, (Kuna): Most of the Arab-Gulf states have realised more than 90 per cent of child immunisation against smallpox, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) on the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of its establishment.

Latest statistics until mid-1989 show that the percentage of child immunisation for small pox reached 84 per cent in Saudi Arabia, 87 per cent in Bahrain and 92 per cent in Kuwait.

Referring to the state of the world's children, the report gives an in-depth account in terms of basic indicators, nutrition, health, education, demographic indicators, economic indicators, women, less populous countries and the rate of progress.

Trends

On present trends, over 100 million under-fives will die in the 1990s and many times that number will grow up malnourished, the report said.

The prospect of a world summit for children, the new convention on the rights of the child and practical advances such as the near achievement of universal child immunisation, all represent progress towards the principle of protecting health and

development of the great majority of the world's children - an affordable cost.

There are six major low-cost opportunities for improving lives and health of children in the developing world in the 1990s:

More than half of all child deaths and malnutrition can be attributed to vaccine-preventable disease, dehydration, and pneumonia all can be prevented and treated at low cost with mobilisation of today's new communication capacity, the report added.

Combined with advances in knowledge, on nutrition, and on the importance of breast-feeding and birth spacing, these breakthroughs could save the lives of at least 50 million children and protect the normal growth of many millions more, the report said.

The report calls for more progress towards the great goals of food, water, health care and education for all.

It urges increases in aid should be offered in support of the developing nation's own plans for specific reductions in absolute poverty and measurable improvements in the survival, health and nutrition of children.

No duplication in education: Haroun

Call to improve system

THE undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Dr. Mubassir Al Haroun has said that the future of Kuwait lies in the progress and prosperity of the applied education system, pointing to the top-level concern for this type of learning.

He called on the teaching staff at the applied education institutes to seize the chance and develop the related curricular programmes, particularly since the next five-year plan emphasised the importance of training and development.

He told the teaching staff during the open meeting organised by the cultural committee of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training at its headquarters in Qadliya yesterday: "The ministry is in the process of growth and that it has plans for numerous projects to sort out the existing crisis for

buildings and facilities whether at the university or the authority.

He added that the primary function of the ministry is to co-ordinate efforts between the Kuwait University and the authority's various institutes, pointing out that a proposed establishment of a special council to undertake this task is being considered.

He emphasised the ministry's decision not to allow for any duplication of efforts or work of its various teaching and learning agencies.

Feedback

He said it was not practically possible to collect the views of the teaching staff on the new higher education draft law. The project has been routed to the relevant authorities for opinion feedback and the final result would

become known in three or four years time, Haroun said.

He added that children of the teaching staff operating at the authority had the right to join its various colleges and centres, but whether or not their right included the university and related facilities, was still being considered.

He disclosed that certain subjects were difficult to Arabise and that there were committees formed at the Gulf-level for the purpose to Arabise certain science courses.

Working plan

Meanwhile, the assistant undersecretary for planning and development at the Ministry of Education Dr. Rasheed Al Hamad has called on all heads of departments working under him to further increase efforts to rectify the educational system.

Zakat House rehabilitation programme a success

THE director of Zakat House Fuad Al Omar has said that project to train and qualify needy families to be productive was supervised by the house. The project initially started with 15 ladies proved to be a success and the number of trainees has registered a continued increase. The house has organised five of these training courses till now. Two of them were carried out in co-operation with Public Authority for Applied Education and other three courses were held at the Zakat House. He hoped that more courses will be organised in future to achieve the ambitions of the house.

These ladies took part in several charitable bazaars held by the house and other local charity societies and clothes produced by these ladies were sold at these bazaars. The house succeeded in transferring the needy families from consuming to productive families that can ensure their monthly incomes instead of getting donations. The house helps these families and ladies to market their clothes and handicrafts.

"We are studying the idea of offering training courses for needy families in carpentry, car mechanics and typewriting," Omar said and added that second stage of the project will aim at making all families getting donations from the house depend on themselves for their incomes. The project will also allow men in these families to get training in co-operation with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, the official said.

Infiltrator nabbed

KUWAIT'S Criminal Court sentenced a man to 26 months in jail with hard labour and to be followed by deportation. The court was told that the accused was arrested by Abdali customs inspectors while he was trying to infiltrate the country without a passport. The accused was also found to be carrying a pistol and 18 bullets.



Premier chairs committee meeting

HH the Crown Prince and Premier Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah yesterday conferred with members of the committee responsible for following up the implementation of special measures on boosting the country's economic situation.

During the meeting, the committee reviewed reactions and positive indicators on the various fields toward the recommendations included in the joint economic report.

HH the Crown Prince and Premier had emphasised during his meeting the significance of co-ordination with all parties and sectors concerned and also

taking into consideration the proposals and remarks, which arise during the phases of application of the reports.

Sheikh Saad also reviewed some of the aspects related to implementing the recommendations on upgrading the effectiveness of the difficult debt clearing programme.

Closing the meeting, HH wished the committee all success in its mission, while head and members of the committee pledged to do their utmost in serving their country.

Aids law to protect society, says Awadi

Violators to be penalised

MINISTER of Planning and Acting Minister of Health, Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awadi announced yesterday that the Aids law to be issued very shortly is intended to protect society from the killer disease. He stressed that the new law will solve all the legal issues and conflicts and will determine the nature of the relation between the Aids patients and society. The law falling under article 18 will shortly be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. The Aids law allows the isolation of the Aids patients or those suspected to be patients in accordance with a decision of a medical commission.

Public police will assist in the isolation. The law also punishes with a jail term of not more than seven years and a fine not exceeding KD7,000 to all persons who know that they were Aids patients or carriers and intentionally infect others with the disease.

The law requires all couples planning to get married to undergo an Aids test, but it does not consider infection of any of them of Aids as an obstacle for completing the marriage, provided they both submit a written approval of their desire to go ahead with the marriage. The law also requires that doctors should inform the wife or husband in case any of them is infected with Aids.

Definition

The first article of the law defines the Aids disease as is scientifically well known as the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and asks the minister of health to add any more details to the definition that may come up in the future. The second article states that the main aims of this law is to protect the public and apply all the necessary preventive measures, but without violating other laws.

According to the law, the minister of health will appoint a medical body to be responsible for the treatment of Aids patients and taking preventive measures against the disease. All doctors whether in the government or private sectors refer all Aids

patients, carriers or suspects to this designated body.

Tests

Other articles in the law bans the application of the Aids test on any person before obtaining written approval from the person. In case the person refuses, the doctors are banned from applying the test. As an exception to this rule, the Ministry of Health however, can carry out the Aids test on a person, despite his refusal, if the medical authorities suspect the person to be an Aids patient or carrier, with the aim to provide treatment to him.

The law also gives the right to the Ministry of Health to take the appropriate measures to apply the Aids test on people returning to Kuwait particularly from destinations where Aids is known to be widespread. The aim of the test should be to ensure that the person is free of the Aids virus.

The minister of health will issue the necessary regulations for conducting such tests. The law also allows the Ministry of Health to apply the Aids test on foreigners coming to Kuwait with the aim to stay here, in order to ensure they are free of Aids virus and are not carriers. Regulations for this will be issued by the minister of health.

Ban

The new Aids law, the first of its kind ever to be issued in Kuwait, allows the isolation of an Aids patient or a suspect of being Aids patient, in accordance with a recommendation by the concerned medical commission. The commission can however, recommend to send the patient or the suspect for treatment in accordance with the normal medical procedures. In case of ordering the isolation of the patient, public police can be called to carry out the isolation. The law bans all doctors in Kuwait from disclosing the secrets of their Aids patients, except for meeting some international or bilateral agreements or in cases allowed by the law.

The Aids law gives the minister of health the right to send the non-Kuwaiti Aids patients back to their home countries or to any other country they chose. This also applies to suspects. In case

the Aids patient is working with a non-government or a private establishment, the Ministry of Health should inform his employers that he is not fit for work without specifying the reasons, if asked by the patient or the side of work.

Marriage

Concerning marriage, the law commits any person willing to get married to submit a certificate stating that he/she is free of Aids. If one or both partners are proved to be patients or carriers of Aids, it will not be a reason to stop the marriage as long as the couple submit a written approval stating they wish to go ahead with their marriage although they know that one or both of them are infected with the Aids. It states that if the husband or the wife are proved to have Aids, the treating doctor must inform the other partner personally of this fact.

The law compels persons who come to know that they are Aids patients to inform the Ministry of Health immediately of this fact. They have to abide by the preventive and treatment measures the ministry asks them to follow. Such persons should make sure they don't transfer the disease to any other person. Aids patients, according to the law, are not banned from going abroad for treatment. Upon their return they must surrender themselves to the Ministry of Health in order to carry out the necessary check ups and tests.

The law bans taking out the dead bodies of Aids patients from their graves in cases allowed by laws, unless a specialised doctor from the Ministry of Health is present to take the necessary preventive measures. The law asks the Ministry of Health to form a consultative committee for combating Aids. The minister of health will issue all the necessary measures concerning the committee.

Violators of the regulations, except infecting others with Aids intentionally, will subject the violator to a jail sentence not exceeding six months and a fine not exceeding KD500 or one of the two penalties.

US battleship New Jersey leaving Gulf, heads for straits

Courtesy call to Bahrain, Dubai

MANAMA, Dec 12, (AP): The battleship USS New Jersey, the largest warship ever to visit the Gulf, left Dubai today and headed out of the waterway, toward waters where Iranian forces were conducting their biggest naval manoeuvres in a decade.

The 50,000-ton New Jersey departed from the United Arab Emirates port at mid-morning after a two-night stopover, the second on a Gulf visit. US officials said was aimed at showing the continuing American commitment to the region since the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988.

Earlier the New Jersey paid a one-night courtesy call to Bahrain, base for the US Navy's permanent Gulf fleet.

The Middle East force. Saudi Arabia denied permission for the World War II-vintage ship, with its 16-inch (406mm) guns, to visit the Saudi oil port of Dhahran, where some 8,000 Americans live.

After leaving Dubai, the battleship was joined by two missile cruisers, the USS Leahy and USS Sterett, in the southern Gulf. The three were apparently to transit the Strait of Hormuz at night.

The Leahy was going home after a tour of duty in the Gulf. The Sterett is part of the New Jersey's battle group, currently assigned to the Indian Ocean.

At 4 pm local time (0100 GMT) the

three ships were observed passing near Abu Musa island, heading toward the strait that separates Iran from the Arabian peninsula.

At normal cruising speed of 25 to 30 knots (30-36 mph) the New Jersey would need about six hours to pass through the 35-kilometre (22-mile) wide Hormuz into the Gulf of Oman.

Iran, meanwhile, said its armed forces were conducting a fourth day of naval manoeuvres, with a mock amphibious landing on an island in the Gulf of Oman.

The weekend manoeuvres, code-named Zulfiqar-3, are the largest since the Islamic revolution in 1979, according to Tehran radio, and the second

exercise since the Iraq-Iran war ended in a truce in August 1988.

The Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Cyprus, said commandos and other troops took part in the mock invasion. It said they were supported by US-built F-14 fighter planes, Iranian naval ships and gunboats manned by paramilitary Revolutionary Guards and "mounted with Stinger missiles."

The New Jersey, based in Long Beach, California, arrived in the Indian Ocean earlier this month for a three-day deployment, replacing the aircraft carrier USS Midway.

While left Washington without a carrier-based air strike capability in the

area for the first time since 1986, US officials said it in no way diminishes American commitments to maintaining security in the strategic, oil-rich Gulf.

Military sources in Washington, asking not to be named, said current plans call for another carrier, the nuclear-powered USS Enterprise, to succeed the battleship.

The Pentagon said the New Jersey, refurbished for service during the Vietnam war and again in the early 1980s, is the first US battleship in modern times to enter the Gulf. Navy records show it to be the largest warship ever in the waterway.

Iran called the New Jersey's five-day

visit to the Gulf a provocation, and on the Arabian side the welcome was low key.

The ship anchored well offshore at both stops, with no local press on television coverage. The ship carries the onus in the Middle East for hitting civilian areas of Lebanon with one-ton shells in early 1984 when a US peacocking force became embroiled in Lebanon's civil war.

"As long as the right people knew it was in the Gulf, the United States could make the point, that whatever the composition of forces, the basic commitment to security is still there," said the diplomat, asking not to be named.

ARAB TIMES

Thought for today

THE best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer someone else up — Mark Twain, US writer (1835-1910).

New Jersey a ghost in Gulf

Iran cries provocation

MANAMA, (AP): Iran has branded the arrival of the US battleship New Jersey in the Gulf a provocation, but the most powerful warship ever to enter the waterway might as well have been a ghost ship as far as other Gulf states were concerned.

Arab sensitivity to foreign intrusions, US policy toward Israel, and the New Jersey's fearsome firepower probably combined to keep the visit from making the public relations splash that US officials evidently had hoped for, diplomatic sources said Monday.

Saudi Arabia, despite friendly ties with the United States, denied the New Jersey permission to enter Dhahran, a port that is home for about 8,000 Americans, oil workers and their families, and is frequently visited by other US ships.

As the battleship neared the end of its visit, diplomats said the Saudi action had possibly encouraged other Gulf Arab states to soft-pedal an event that was intended by US officials to demonstrate what a Pentagon spokesman called "the continuing US commitment to the region" since the end of the Iran-Iraq war last year.

Patrol

The New Jersey, a 45-year-old warship updated with missiles and other weaponry to complement its World War II-vintage, 16-inch (406 mm) guns, recently arrived for a three-month patrol tour in the Indian Ocean.

Its side trip into the Gulf was the first for a US battleship in "modern times," the Defense Department said.

US Navy records here show it to be the biggest warship of any nation ever to sail into the cramped and busy oil waterway.

Yet in anchoring far offshore and attracting only limited news coverage, the 58,000-ton vessel has been almost unnoticed since it entered the Strait of Hormuz last Thursday.

Predictably, the strongest reactions to the New Jersey's arrival came from Iran, which accused the United States of a "provocation" and "heightening friction."

Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Hossein Hashemian, a deputy speaker of parliament, as saying the move "will not augur well for the United States."

Security

He repeated Iran's oft-stated demand that foreign navies should get out, leaving the security of the oil waterway to the countries around it.

While US officials were expected to call the New Jersey's visit a success, some Americans had earlier questioned the wisdom of timing such a visit on the anniversary of the Palestinian uprising against Israel, or bringing into Arab waters a warship remembered by some for misdirected shelling that killed civilians in Lebanon in early 1984.

A naval source, asking not to be named, said the only reported complaint was by an American diplomat who criticized the Pentagon's disclosure of the visit.

"I don't know how we're expected to hide a battleship," the source said.

US embassy officials in Riyadh confirmed that Saudi Arabia had asked that a proposed visit (by the New Jersey) be deferred.

There was no comment from the Saudis. But Western diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Riyadh's refusal to let the New Jersey enter the oil port at Dhahran probably influenced the low-key handling by other Arab states.

Facilities

At Bahrain, which provides shore facilities for US Navy ships permanently based in the Gulf, the New Jersey anchored 2 miles (3.2 km) offshore.

Except for some dignitaries invited to tour the ship, probably not more than a handful of residents even noticed the lean gray silhouette on the horizon as they drove along seaside highways.

Gulf newspapers and television stations that routinely cover maritime events, including port calls by foreign warships, ignored the New Jersey's overnight visit.

The English-language Gulf News carried a small story saying the ship had entered the Gulf, but nothing about it being at Bahrain.

Clive Jacques, the newspaper's editor-in-chief, said: "Naval ships from a number of countries regularly visit the Gulf and Bahrain at times among the ports of call."

"We recorded the fact that the USS New Jersey was in the Gulf, but it's not the newspaper's policy, as a Bahrain publication, to report extensively on such matters."

At Dubai, the New Jersey again stayed offshore, away from onlookers.

Newspapers in the United Arab Emirates reported the ship's Gulf arrival, but not its planned visit to Dubai. Only the appearance of unusual numbers of American sailors — in civilian clothes — might have offered a clue to the ship's presence.

Some newspapers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait carried stories on the New Jersey's visit, but made no mention of its ports of call.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1545 — Protestant princes opposing Holy Roman Emperor Charles V meet at Frankfurt.
- 1570 — Denmark, by peace of Stettin, recognizes independence of Sweden.
- 1789 — Austrian Netherlands declares independence as Belgium.
- 1806 — Madrid capitulates to Napoleon Bonaparte.
- 1897 — Russian forces occupy Port Arthur on Yellow Sea.
- 1916 — About 9,000 Austro-Hungarian troops are killed in avalanche in the Alps.
- 1921 — United States, Britain, France and Japan sign Washington treaty to respect each others' rights over insular possessions in Pacific.
- 1937 — Japanese troops take Nanking City in China.
- 1944 — In World War II, Japanese suicide plane crashes into US cruiser Nashville, killing 133 crewmen.
- 1950 — South Africa refuses to place South-West Africa under United Nations trusteeship.
- 1967 — Military government in Greece crushes counter-coup, and King Constantine flees to Rome with his family.
- 1969 — Britain announces agreement to withdraw all its forces from Libya within next few months.
- 1972 — US Apollo 17 astronauts, on last US Moon mission, unveil plaque dedicated to peace — on lunar surface.
- 1974 — Egypt demands 50-year freeze on Israel's population as condition for peace in Middle East.
- 1986 — Iraq says its warplanes struck and destroyed an air defense network and power plant in Tehran.
- 1988 — Seventeen anti-government rebels and six civilians are killed in fresh wave of violence in Sri Lanka.



South African police seize a student during a demonstration. (Reuter wirephoto)

Tough tactics in South Africa

Lawlessness within police force

JOHANNESBURG, (AP): Mass murder, armed robbery, abduction, extortion, assassination. In the past two years, active and former members of South Africa's National Police Force have been accused or convicted of all these crimes, and many more.

Allegations of police misdeeds have touched only a small part of the 60,000-member force, but they are still so frequent that seemingly startling cases often receive cursory coverage in the local media. Senior commanders, in public speeches, have taken to reminding the force that police officers are supposed to protect people.

"The problem has gotten worse because of the emergency regulations (imposed in 1985), which to a large extent put the police beyond the law," said Brian Currin, head of an organization of human rights lawyers. "A mentality has developed among some people in the police force that they can do virtually anything."

Accusations against the police are nothing new. For decades, anti-apartheid activists have complained of brutal and sometimes deadly police tactics against opponents of the government's racial policies.

Sometimes, out-of-court payments were made to victims of police brutality and occasionally policemen faced criminal charges. But police commanders generally stood by their men, saying tough tactics were necessary to counter the "revolutionary onslaught" of militant black opposition groups.

Lately, however, active and former policemen have been convicted or accused of crimes so clearly indefensible that police commanders and government leaders have shifted their rhetoric, asking the public not to blame the entire force for the misdeeds of a minority of officers.

"I will protect the interests of every member of the police as I do my own, but I expect every member, in the same spirit, to protect the interests of every inhabitant of this land as he does his own," said the new commissioner of police, Lt Gen. Johan Van Der Merwe, in a recent speech.

The latest wave of accusations against the police follow public allegations for former and active policemen running death squads against anti-apartheid activists. They also follow moves by F.W. de Klerk, who replaced P.W. Botha as president in August, to reduce the political power accumulated by the security forces under Botha and to make police more accountable for their actions.

Two of the most sensational cases of the past two years involved former policemen.

One of them, avowed white-supremacist Barred Strydom, is on death row after being convicted of murdering seven blacks and an Indian in two shootings spree last year. While on the police force, Strydom had posed for a snapshot holding the severed head of a black man in his hand.

Two other former policemen have been detained in connection with the assassination this year of two prominent white activists, university lecturer David Webster in Johannesburg and lawyer Anton Lubowski in Windhoek, Namibia. One of the suspects was convicted in 1984 of stealing cars and murdering drug dealers while serving as a narcotics detective.

The government also is investigating allegations that death squads within the ranks of the police force have killed government opponents.

There are numerous other cases involving active members of the police. Among them:

● Eleven white policemen were arrested on armed

Black groups fight for control

MPUMALANGA, South Africa, (Reuter): Mpumalanga means "where the sun rises", but the tone of hope and optimism implied by the name of this South African black township is not shared by the 100,000-plus people who live here.

Mpumalanga is one of the principal battlefields in a new eruption of South Africa's so-called "Zulu war", involving rival black groups fighting for control of the deceptively tranquil-looking townships spread over the lush hills of Natal province.

Clusters of fire-blackened, deserted homes and a palpable air of tension are signs of the horrors that have invaded the hilly streets of the huge township midway between the port of Durban and the Natal capital of Pietermaritzburg.

First-hand evidence comes from Petrus Ngcobo, a Mpumalanga resident who fled during a visiting reporter's car in order to tell his story.

Violence

"I wasn't at home when the people attacked, but my wife was," Ngcobo said in Zulu, his words translated by a companion who was eager that word of the often-overlooked township violence be transmitted to the outside world.

"She locked herself in the toilet, but they poured petrol under the door and set it alight," Ngcobo continued.

She doused the flame with water from the toilet and escaped. But the house was eventually burnt down. The Ngcobos and their five children have moved in with nearby friends.

An unknown number of Mpumalanga residents have fled the township altogether, some of them on foot balancing a few possessions on their

robbery charges after they allegedly robbed black entrepreneurs in several townships near Johannesburg. The suspects, all in their 20s, allegedly targeted owners of licensed and unlicensed taverns in the townships and stole at least \$40,000 over a four-month period.

● Two senior police officers in Cape Town have been charged with robbery, extortion and abduction. They allegedly abducted a black tavern owner,

heads. "It's been hell over the past few weeks," Mpumalanga Mayor Roger Sishi said in an interview conducted at the petrol station that he runs.

"People will spend a very unhappy Christmas in this town," Sishi added.

Christmas is part of the reason for the renewed violence, which in November killed at least 54 people in Mpumalanga plus many others in nearby Natal townships.

Revenge

Migrant workers come home on holidays after a sometimes spending months away, but when they see what has happened to their families and property, they go looking for revenge.

A rise in alcohol consumption plays its role. There is also a strong criminal element taking advantage of any breakdown in law and order.

According to Peter Kerschhoff, a Pietermaritzburg human rights activist who monitors the violence, more than 2,000 people have died in the almost three years since the unrest got under way.

About 1,650 of the victims have been in townships around Pietermaritzburg, a small, picturesque city of Jacaranda-lined streets whose white residents take scant notice of the mayhem around them.

Many of the dead are victims of isolated murders carried out at night, but recent weeks have also seen pitched battles in broad daylight fought by mobs armed with everything from spears to home-made guns.

Rivalry

While the causes of the fighting vary from township to township, the main theme is rivalry between Inkatha, a politically moderate movement headed by Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthe,

elezi, and the leftist United Democratic Front (UDF).

Both sides resolutely oppose apartheid laws, and they both acknowledge that the violent rivalry harms the black cause in its confrontation with white-led Pretoria, but they have little else in common.

"They have fallen into the trap of seeing each other as enemies instead of the apartheid," said Radley Keys, an official of the white liberal Democratic Party.

But, emphasizing that it is naive to think that South Africa's major racial tensions will disappear, Keys added: "Black and white are facing a hostile white regime does not mean that you share the same strategy in opposing it."

Siding

Like other liberals, Keys accuses the police of siding with Inkatha against the more stridently anti-government UDF, a charge that Pretoria authorities vigorously deny.

Black radicals normally oppose the deployment of the South African Armed Forces in the townships to quell unrest, but the recent arrival of troops in Mpumalanga has, ironically, given rise to hope that peace may return.

The police are discredited, residents say, and the military is at least neutral.

White apathy is also an obstacle to ending the violence. Kerschhoff noted that only five of the Natal victims have been white.

"If there had been more white deaths, I do not believe we would have reached the same level of violence," he said.

In Pietermaritzburg, the burning issue of the day appears to be not the township unrest but rather the fate of a 150-year-old fig tree blocking a planned road extension.

then tortured and robbed him. One of the defendants, Lt Col Stephanus Brits, was head of a murder and robbery unit in Cape Town.

● Lawyers have told recent sessions of a government-appointed inquiry commission that white officers commanding the police force in the black homeland of KwaZulu-Buswele oversaw recruitment of vigilantes who terrorized residents.

Hirawi pines for normal life

BEIRUT, (Reuter): Lebanese President Elias Hirawi, locked out of his palace and living in constant fear of assassination, has one Christmas wish — a normal life.

There will be no Christmas cocktail parties for Hirawi, who has been confined to a villa in heavily-fortified Army barracks since his election on Nov 24.

"The President does not move from his residence. He does not venture out. This annoys him especially because he is hyperactive. Sometimes he complains. He feels chained," his niece and adviser Lena Hirawi told Reuters.

She said the President could not even go out to buy Christmas gifts because of the security cocoon wrapped around him after the car bomb killing of his predecessor Rene Muawad.

His food and newspapers are bought from a different shop every day to avoid attempts to poison him, Lena said.

"Everything is scrutinized. Everything they buy for the President is rigorously checked," she said. "The cook tastes the food first to make sure it is not poisoned."

Hirawi often sleeps at secret locations. "He does not tell anyone about his movements. Few of his security men and relatives would know that he is changing locations," Lena said.

His wife, Mona, spends the day at their house in the Christian town of Zahle, seven km (four miles) from Ablah, and joins him only at night.

Hirawi, who lived in the Christian enclave until he was elected, has not been able to return to his apartment in East Beirut or spend time at his house in Zahle, his hometown.

"He does not have time for his family and children. Although he tries to dedicate Sunday for them he ends up holding important meetings with officials and statesmen," his niece said.

Hirawi has not been able to reach the presidential palace in the Christian suburb of Baabda, because it is occupied by General Michel Aoun who refuses to recognize his authority.

Hirawi, who personally chooses the Army officers guarding him, lives in a fortress-like brick villa surrounded by troops.

Names of visitors have to be given in advance to the Army checkpoint at the entrance of the barracks. Security men carry out rigorous searches: Cameras, tape-recorders and pens are inspected for fear of explosives.

Lebanese soldiers man three checkpoints along the 500-meter drive to the villa, stopping and searching cars at each point.

The 63-year-old President, known for his gregariousness, has refused to receive well-wishers.

"I have closed my doors to them. I will only receive them when I unify Lebanon... when I put Lebanon on the road to peace," Hirawi told Reuters in a recent interview.

Quote me

"We cannot wait until the Kerk is ready. Our struggle to dismantle apartheid and exploitation and to build a democratic future will go on." — Declaration by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM).

"The strategic objective of the regime remains that of making apartheid as palatable to the South African people and the international community. More importantly, the clear intention is to protect the privileges of the white anti-apartheid movement's declaration on South Africa."

"We will continue to resist apartheid, even defy and dismantle it, whatever the cost. We will build the maximum unity among all anti-apartheid forces. We will continue to demand that the international community intensify its efforts to isolate the De Klerk government." — Mass Democratic Movement vowing to take apartheid in South Africa to task.

"I'm not even 20 percent as excited as if I would have beaten him. If I would have beaten him, I'd feel so much better about going to the bank. As it is, I don't even feel like the money is really mine. It's like I lucked out." — Andre Agassi after Jimmy Connors defaulted and he won the ITT stakes match.

"I sort of expected to end up with Ireland. But the Netherlands took it's incredible. English coach Bobby Robson on the World Cup draw."

"It's nice to do something John has done. I enjoy being recognized for something I do myself rather than what I am. It's tough being recognized when you lose first round in qualifying." — Patrick McEnroe after winning the Masters doubles with Jim Grabb.

"If capitalism returned to Cuba some day, the country's independence and sovereignty would disappear forever. We would be an extension of Miami, a simple appendix of the Yankee empire, fulfilling the disgusting prophecy of 19th century US leaders." — Fidel Castro referring to the US city where many of his opponents are based.

"If events follow their present course — the bipolarized world we knew in the post-war era will inevitably become a unipolarized world under US hegemony." — Cuban leader Fidel Castro on East-West detente and the Third World.

"Our main concern will be not to underestimate our opponents. If we do that we should easily qualify for the second round." — Italian coach Azzeglio Vicini.

"Our group is not the easiest, but we should have no problems in qualifying for the second round." — Argentine coach Carlos Bilardo on their group in the World Cup.

"I used this opportunity to make a strong appeal to give enough attention to the tragedy of the prisoners of war who have been kept for a long time as hostages in Iranian hands to the political process, which has been prolonged by Iranian intransigence." — Israeli Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz said to reporters after a meeting with UN secretary-general.

"At a time when America's bipartisan commitment to freedom is bearing fruit in Eastern Europe, the last thing Bush should be doing is wavering in our commitment to freedom in China." — House of Representatives Democratic leader Richard Gephardt said.

"We have contacts with countries that have egregious records on human rights, so I'm going to keep looking for ways to find common ground," Bush told the newspaper editors.

"The promises made by Mladenov could really change political life in this country. But they are still far from the total reforms that our society is now expecting." — Bulgarian dissident Salomir Tsankov said about Communist Party chief Petar Mladenov's promise on free elections.

"De Klerk has done nothing which convinces us that he is genuine. There are no actions to back up his vague promises." — Anti-apartheid declaration to a conference.

Art Buchwald

Modern retailing or nouveau cannibalism

I WENT Christmas shopping the other day at Blackdale's department store.

"Can I help you?" the sales clerk asked.

"I'm looking for a present for my wife. Is there anything on sale?"

"We have a nice buy on the store," he told me.

"What do you mean 'on the store'?"

The whole place is for sale. We were planning to mark it down after Christmas, but since Bloomingdale's is on the market, as well as Saks, we decided to reduce the price now.

"I don't want a store," I said. "I was thinking more of a nice, woolen sweater."

"We have those, of course, but if you purchased Blackdale's you can get 40 per cent off anything on the fourth floor, which includes women's running shoes."

"I don't understand it," I responded. "Why are you trying to sell Blackdale's when you work in the home furnishings department?"

"Every employee in the store has been ordered to unload the establishment any way he or she possibly can. Management feels that there has to be a live one among all of its customers. If you buy it, we'll throw in our branch store in New Jersey as well. You don't

need to put anything down for three months."

"I'm curious about something. Why are you selling Blackdale's?"

"It's the same old retailing story. Five years ago, a Canadian company bought us, and then they were taken over by the Australians, who then sold the place to Siamese twins from Singapore."

"The deal depended on huge loans, which had to be paid back with the cash flow from our store. When the new owners took away our daily receipts, we didn't have any money left to buy merchandise. Without stock we had no cash flow, and when the owners went broke they put up for sale."

"That's awful."

"We call it modern retailing or nouveau cannibalism."

"Anyway, it's not my problem. Please direct me to the sweater department."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. If you acquire Blackdale's, we will issue you a gold credit card, and we'll paint the walls on the main floor and colour you want."

"I'm not interested in acquiring a department store. If the former owners can't make a go of it, how can I?"

"They were all sleazeballs. They intended to sell of the store, escalator by escalator, until there was nothing left. They were only interested in making money by burying Blackdale's. You look like a man who cares about the survival of a retail store."

"I am, but I'd just as soon get my wife a popcorn maker," I told him.

"I know what you are thinking. You'd rather have Saks or Bloomingdale's. It would be a mistake. You're never going to beat a location like this. Our traffic is twice as heavy as theirs, and we have an upper-bracket clientele that any bankrupt store in America would kill for. We'll even gift-wrap the entire men's furnishings department for you and deliver it on Christmas night."

"I still think a popcorn maker would be more useful."

"The thrill of owning a popcorn maker lasts only a few days. A bankrupt department store is forever."

I didn't say yes to the man, and I didn't say no. I'm thinking it over. Blackdale's costs more than I really can afford, but then again so does everything else around Christmastime.

Los Angeles Times Syndicate

MIDEAST BRIEFS

Smog alert

NICOSIA, Dec 12, (Reuters): Tehran radio urged city residents with heart and respiratory problems to stay indoors today because of dangerous levels of air pollution.

The radio quoted the environment protection organisation as saying the level of carbon monoxide and other dangerous gases had reached more than 2.5 times the safe limit at midday.

The radio also urged motorists to leave their cars at home and use buses or taxis. Some 1.4 million vehicles, many old and in poor repair, and 288,000 factories and workshops pump smoke and exhaust fumes into Tehran's air.

Quake kills

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Dec 12, (AP): A mountain slide triggered by an earthquake killed one person in southern Iran today, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

The agency said no reports were yet available on other casualties or the extent of damage caused by the quake, which was centred 65 miles (100 kilometres) northeast of the city of Shiraz.

The earthquake struck at 8.10 am (0440 GMT) and registered 4.4 on the Richter Scale, the agency reported in a dispatch monitored in Cyprus.

Shamir recovering
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 12, (AP): Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is recovering after a successful hernia operation today, his doctors said.

Shamir, 74, underwent the hour-long operation under a local anesthetic and spoke to his surgeons and anesthesiologists throughout the surgery. Dr Aryeh Diner, director of surgery at Hadassah Hospital in occupied Jerusalem, said on Israeli army radio.

Diner said Shamir probably will be hospitalized for several days.

Rebels denial
NAIROBI, Dec 12, (AP): Sudanese rebels today rejected a "black list" of Sudanese government claims to have captured two southern towns and said the government was claiming to have broken a rebel siege around another.

Shant Elzein, Lt Gen Omar Hassan Al Bashir on Saturday claimed his forces had won back Kaka, a tiny coastal town 350 miles (560 km) south of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, the previous day.

Arab League HQ
CAIRO, Dec 12, (Kuna): The nine-story Arab League's building here, which is overlooking the Nile river from one side and one of the most famous squares in Egypt from the other, is being renovated.

The "eye-catching" reconstruction has spurred speculation over the imminent return of the Arab League headquarters to Egypt after nearly two years of operating in Tunisia in the aftermath of the suspension of Egypt's membership in the organisation.

UN lambasted
UNITED NATIONS, Dec 12, (AP): The UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon was lambasted today for allegedly executing and kidnapping UN soldiers in Lebanon, yesterday accused the UN of making its forces "sitting ducks" by failing to ensure their safety.

Higgins, a US marine officer, was serving with UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon when he was kidnapped in February, 1988. Higgins' body has not been recovered.

Foot-and-mouth toll
TUNIS, Dec 12, (Reuters): An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in central Tunisia has killed 19,000 lambs and 900 ewes, goats and cows, officials said today.

The authorities diagnosed the disease last week and have since vaccinated 80,000 animals. More vaccine is on order from France, the officials in the Agriculture Ministry said.

They had already isolated the affected flocks and suspended livestock markets in some areas. The worst-hit provinces were Sidi Bou Zid and Gafsa, about 170 km (110 miles) southwest of Tunis.

Influx of Soviet Jews
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 12, (Reuters): Israel is facing the largest influx of Jews in modern history as hundreds of thousands of them prepare to leave the Soviet Union, former Soviet dissident Nathan Sharansky said.

"We are now facing the biggest exodus of Jews in modern history, maybe since the Jews left Spain," Sharansky said, referring to the Spanish expulsion of 1492.

Sharansky, who emigrated to Israel in 1986 after serving nine years in Soviet prisons, told a news conference that recent Soviet reforms meant hundreds of thousands of Jews would leave for Israel.

Greece-Cyprus talks
ATHENS, Dec 12, (AP): Cyprus President George Vassiliou arrived today to brief Greek government and political party leaders on the prospects of reviving intercommunal talks on his troubled island.

Shortly after his arrival, Vassiliou met with Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras to bring him up to date on efforts to rekindle United Nations sponsored negotiations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

US wants former king to play a role in settling Afghan political problem
ISLAMABAD, Dec 12, (AP): Anti-communist rebels said yesterday that the United States wants Afghanistan's ex-king Zahir Shah to play a role in a political solution to the decade-long war.

Washington's special envoy to the rebels, Peter Tomsen, expressed support for a role for Zahir Shah during a meeting yesterday with Burhanuddin Rabbani, a key rebel leader, rebel sources said.

The guerrillas, known as Mujahideen or Islamic holy warriors, are fighting to topple Kabul's Marxist government.

It is the first time that Washington has openly pushed for Zahir Shah's involvement. Up until now, it has concentrated support on a self-styled rebel government assembled 10 months ago.

The seven rebel groups, headquartered in Pakistan and heavily bankrolled by the United States, are deeply divided over the ex-king's prospective involvement in a post-war Afghanistan. Radical factions have threatened to kill the former monarch if he returns from exile in Rome.

Midia, a joint rebel information organ, said Tomsen urged Rabbani to support the convening of a traditional Afghan grand council or Shura, to include rebel fighters based in Pakistan and Iran, key rebel commanders and Zahir Shah and his supporters.

Tomsen has refused to speak to reporters during his week-long trip to Pakistan to brief rebel leaders discussions by US President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev regarding Afghanistan at their Malta summit earlier this month.

In the talks, Gorbachev reportedly insisted that Afghanistan's Marxist President Najib retain power while Bush insisted he step aside.

The more moderate rebel leaders want the ex-monarch to return to Afghanistan to replace Najib and organise elections once an estimated 5.5 million refugees return from Pakistan and Iran.

About 2 million are in Iran, and an estimated 3.5 million live in camps along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.

The majority of the refugees fled after 1979, when Soviet soldiers rolled into Afghanistan to crush a burgeoning Muslim insurgency.

Moscow withdrew its troops from Afghanistan on Feb 15 in line with a United Nations-brokered accord, but the refugees have refused to leave Pakistan because of the continued fighting.

Israel won't be forced into talks

'No US pressure'

WASHINGTON, Dec 12, (Reuters): President George Bush said today that he would not pressure Israel to negotiate with the PLO.

"I don't think it is the role of the United States to force Israel to negotiate with the PLO," Bush said at a question-and-answer session with newspaper editors.

Hardliners in Israel have charged that a US plan for three-way talks between the foreign ministers of the United States, Israel and Egypt will lead to a "sell-out" of the PLO.

The United States said last Wednesday that Egypt had accepted Secretary of State James Baker's five-point Middle East initiative and hailed this as a step toward convening historic direct Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

Baker is attempting to get talks underway on elections in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Bush said on Monday that Baker had made "progress" in "working out a very difficult formulation" for talks about elections.

Baker has said that a Middle East peace settlement will eventually require talks between Israel and Palestinian representatives.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who unveiled the election proposal last spring, has ruled out any role for the PLO or its representatives in that process.

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens said yesterday that Israel wants guarantees from the United States that the PLO will have no role in the peace process before he attends talks in Washington.

Arab League envoy to the UN Clovis Makoudi has described as "very disturbing" US Vice-President Dan Quayle's announcement that the US will soon work on repealing a 1975 General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Israeli troops lifted a 12-day curfew on the West Bank town of Nablus today and residents quickly gathered to commemorate four activists whose killing sparked the curfew.

Residents of Nablus, the West Bank's largest town, said more than 100 people gathered in the cashab (market) for their several masked youths read a eulogy in memory of the Arabs shot dead by security forces on Dec 1.

The army accused the four of belonging to the Black Panthers, a group affiliated with the PLO's mainstream Fatah faction and said by the army to have killed 16 Arabs suspected of collaborating with Israel.

During the curfew on Nablus, clamped by the army immediately after the killings, troops rounded up dozens of Palestinian activists in house-to-house searches.

It was one of the longest curfews imposed on the strongly nationalistic city during the two-year-old Palestinian revolt against Israeli rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The army also lifted curfews on several refugee camps and villages around Nablus today but confined residents to their homes in the West Bank town of Bir Zeit.

Troops ordered Arabs to take down banned Palestinian flags and erase nationalist graffiti in Bir Zeit following a paramilitary march there yesterday marking the 21st anniversary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

In Yammou village near the West Bank town of Jenin, a two-week-old baby died in disputed circumstances during a search by the army.

Ibrahim Latif Labadi, 35, said soldiers stepped on his daughter, Bana, when they searched his home, but an army spokesman told Reuters a military doctor determined the baby died from frost bite.

Palestinians said an Israeli civilian shot and wounded a 15-year-old youth in Tulkarm when his vehicle was stoned.

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Jordan moves to remove press gag

AMMAN, Dec 12, (AP): The government yesterday reversed the decree that nationalised Jordan's newspapers last year and reinstated the old boards of directors, continuing a series of liberalising measures.

The action led to immediate changes at the Al Rai Arabic daily, where the previous editor resumed his job and three prominent writers fired earlier were rehired.

The official Jordan news agency said the economic security committee decided to reverse the nationalisation order "in accordance with the new government direction to cancel martial laws."

Although martial law remains in effect, King Hussein and Prime Minister Mudar Badran said recently they will work to restrict its impact. The king chaired Monday's economic committee meeting, according to a source at the prime ministry.

"It assures us of the government's policies of liberalisation and democracy and improving freedom of the press for all," said Mahmoud Al Kayed, resuming his role as editor of the Arabic daily Al Rai.

The kingdom last month held its first general election in 22 years. On Sunday, Prime Minister Mudar Badran announced that many remaining political prisoners would be released.

The government announcement did not refer to the ownership of the papers it forcibly purchased last year.

But Kayed said in a telephone interview he had been assured "the newspapers will be owned by the private sector."

"It is possible that the government will keep some shares for itself, but it will be much less than 50 per cent," he said.

Kayed was a co-owner of Al Rai and its sister publication, the English-language Jordan Times. The decrees also affect the Arabic language dailies Sawt Al Shaab and Ad Dastour.

"The indication is that they want to transfer it to the private sector...but who will own what is not sure," said Mahmoud

Sharif, a former editor and co-owner of Ad Dastour.

Some changes were immediate: Kayed said he had already replaced Al Rai editor Rakan Majali, installed after the nationalisation.

Kayed also rehired three writers who had tangled with government officials: Bader Abdul Haq and Fakir Kawa of Al Rai and Lamis Andoni of the Jordan Times.

"It's great. It's unbelievable," said Andoni, also the local correspondent for a number of Western publications. "It was like a period of mourning as far as the press was concerned. Now we're all celebrating here."

The news agency, Petra, said direction of the newspapers would be returned to the boards of directors ousted by Aug 24, 1988, martial law decision to nationalise the dailies.

Government-linked organisations now own a majority of all the newspapers, but private investors also own shares.

"We have to wait to see what other measures will be taken to consolidate the freedom of the press," Sharif said.

Last year's nationalisation was part of an increasingly tight leash imposed on the press by former Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, who was ousted by the king following four days of anti-Rifai riots over price rises in April.

Many critics said public anger was aggravated by the contrast between declining living standards and repeated optimistic claims in the government-owned press.

Jordanian newspapers have almost always been generally pro-government and critical writers have sometimes been harassed by security forces.

But Sharif noted that "relatively speaking, we have enjoyed a greater amount of freedom of the press than most Arab countries."

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Iraq's no to PoW, pullout linkage

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 12, (Agencies): Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz discussed the stalled Iran-Iraq peace talks yesterday with the secretary-general and later rejected an Iranian proposal linking a prisoner exchange to a troop withdrawal.

"We refuse to make any linkage between the question of prisoners of war and any other question," Aziz said after an hour of talks.

A half meeting with Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar. "The question of PoWs has its own merits...and has to be handled independently of other issues."

Iran earlier had suggested linkage between the question of prisoner repatriation and troop withdrawal. About 100,000 prisoners from the Iran-Iraq war are held by both sides, with Iran holding about 70,000 by unofficial estimates. Iraq holds more territory than Iran.

Aziz met with Perez de Cuellar to discuss the stalemate peace talks, which have failed to formalise a ceasefire. Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati plans to meet the secretary-general today to discuss how to revive the 16-month-old peace process.

"We hope the secretary-general, the Security Council and all of the international community would give more attention to the plight of the PoWs," Aziz told reporters after his meeting.

He said he described to Perez de Cuellar "the tragedy of the PoWs who have been kept for a very long time as hostages in Iranian hands to the political process which has been prolonged by Iranian intransigence."

Keeping prisoners, he said, is a clear violation of the third Geneva convention of 1949.

Talks between the two belligerents lapsed after several rounds, and each side accuses the other of intransigence and bad faith. The United Nations began supervising the ceasefire on Aug 26, 1988.

Aziz told reporters that he had "emphasized the necessity of real direct talks between the two sides under the auspices of the secretary-general." The talks to date have been conducted in the presence of UN mediators.

A mandatory Security Council Resolution, No. 598, called for an immediate ceasefire, followed swiftly by a troop withdrawal to internationally recognised boundaries and an exchange of prisoners of war. Apart from the ceasefire, the resolution has not been carried out, and both sides are disputing the borders for a troop withdrawal.

Iran forces stage a mock attack
NICOSIA, Dec 12, (Reuters): Iranian forces today staged a mock attack on an island today to recover it from occupying troops.

The Iranian news agency Iran said US-made F-14 fighters and Revolutionary Guard boats equipped with Stinger anti-aircraft missiles took part in the attack.

Tehran radio said six fighter-bombers and 18 naval vessels supported enemy positions before marines landed to retake the island. Up to 80 speedboats fired various types of missiles in the exercise, Iran said.

Mubarak reaches out to former foes

Surprise visit to Libya

CAIRO, Dec 12, (Reuters): President Hosni Mubarak made a surprise visit to Tripoli today and held talks with Libyan leader Muammar Khaddafi as Egypt cautiously extends a hand of friendship to its old Arab foe Libya and Syria.

Mubarak telephoned Syrian President Hafiz Al Assad yesterday and agreed air links should be resumed between Cairo and Damascus.

Mubarak held talks with Khaddafi today in the Libyan leader's tent in the town of Sirte, Egypt's Middle East News Agency (Mena) said.

Mena gave no details of the talks, held close to where US navy jets attacked Libyan patrol boats and a radar missile site in 1986 to assert the right of free navigation in the Gulf of Sirte.

Khaddafi, once a fierce critic of Egypt's Middle East policies, warmly embraced Mubarak on arrival and gave him a red carpet reception with a 21-gun salute.

Mubarak's trip, the second to Libya since he reciprocated a visit by Khaddafi to Egypt in October, was expected to last several hours, Egyptian presidential sources said. They said a second round of talks would follow lunch.

Seven ministers, including architects of Egypt's foreign policy and economic affairs, accompanied Mubarak.

Libya's news agency Jana said high-level officials, including Khaddafi's son-in-law, Khalifa Hamdi, — third-in-command in the Libyan hierarchy — joined the talks.

Libya, which has no diplomatic links with Egypt, has moved close to Cairo since Mubarak and Khaddafi broke the ice during an Arab summit in May.

The other Arab nation without ties to Egypt, Syria, agreed yesterday to resume air links with Cairo.

Before starting their talks, the two Arab leaders expressed satisfaction with the state of bilateral relations.

"I am happy to visit Libya," the agency quoted Mubarak as saying. "Libya is a neighbour and friend and for a long time, we have been linked by ties which cannot be cut."

Khaddafi charged that "Zionism and colonialism tried to divide us but the Arab will emerge victorious."

"Egyptian-Libyan relations are moving along well and in the right direction and we are now working to build the base on which we can stand firmly," Khaddafi said.

He said he believed that diplomatic... representation should be cancelled among Arab countries "until we achieve Arab unity."

"I am against diplomatic representation... because what links us together is more than diplomatic relations as we are one people," Khaddafi said.

He praised a decision announced yesterday to resume air links between Egypt and Syria.

"It's all part of the drawn-out process of getting back into the Arab mainstream after Egypt's peace treaty with Israel," one diplomat said.

Libya and Syria are the only two Arab states still to resume formal relations with Egypt, broken when the treaty was signed in 1979.

But an immediate aim would be to help quieten radical Palestinians hosted by Libya and Syria who oppose PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's attempts to enter a dialogue with Israel through Egyptian mediation.

Egypt has in principle accepted a five-point formula for Israeli-Palestinian talks put forward by US Secretary of State James Baker, but Arafat is known to be facing resistance within the Palestine Liberation Organisation to any further compromise with Israel.

"Egypt needs the PLO to stay invisible and not rock the boat for the next several weeks," the diplomat said.

Khaddafi has long been a thorn in Egypt's side, but the process of reconciliation began in October when the Libyan leader met Mubarak in the Egyptian seaside resort of Mersa Metruh and Mubarak reciprocated by travelling across the border to the Libyan garrison town of Tobruk.

The Saudi cabinet carried by the official Saudi Press Agency followed a clash in Beirut.

"The (Saudi) cabinet renews its appeal to all Lebanese parties to stop the armed clashes that erupted anew in several areas in both sectors of the capital, Beirut," the agency, received in Cyprus, quoted Information Minister Ali Al Shahr as saying.

Meanwhile, in Paris, President Francois Mitterrand met with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco, members of the Arab League committee on Lebanon, and reaffirmed France's support for the Taif agreement for ending the violence.

"With President Mitterrand we proceeded with an evaluation of the situation, said Algerian Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghazali.

The Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, said he was "satisfied" with the French position on Lebanon.

Heavy snowfalls
ANKARA, Dec 12, (Reuters): Heavy snow and blizzards have cut off more than 1,000 Turkish villages, forcing schools to close and rivers to overflow, the independent Hurriyet news agency said today.

The body of one man was found crushed under an avalanche in the province of Agri on the Iranian border, it said.

SPECIAL REPORT

Divorced Egyptian women getting a raw deal

Many of these wives are ignorant of their legal rights and their husbands' permanent address

Lima Al Khalafawi
Arab Times staff

DIFFERENT authorities and ministries have been involved in following the cases of divorced Egyptian women and their Kuwaiti children. The problem was publicly debated from 1980 to 1984.

During 1984 one of the Arabic dailies interviewed, Fathi Al Athari, a member of the Ministry of Justice's committee for investigations about complaints of these Egyptian wives against their Kuwaiti husbands. This committee was formed according to the cabinet's decision. In Cairo at the Kuwaiti consulate, Athari said they received 756 cases. Ninety per cent of these are divorce cases and the rest are concerning widows.

The main problems in these cases were:

1. Demands (of Egyptian

women) to issue a Kuwaiti birth certificate for their children and seek co-operation from their husbands to get a Kuwaiti passport in order to determine the nationality of their children who are considered violating the Egyptian law. Kuwaiti husbands however refused to obtain Kuwaiti birth certificates for their children. Kuwaiti husbands referred this to the circumstances behind such marriages by which they did not recognise the existence of the child. As a result, these children face a problem of joining schools only after paying bribes. These children are being harassed by the Egyptian immigration authorities.

2. The fathers who refused to get Kuwaiti passports for their children cite avoiding problems with their families in Kuwait as the reason. Athari said that the committee faced difficult problems when the Kuwaiti father died

without registering his children in his nationality file.

Sometimes, wives faced problems with the loss of official documents that the husband keeps or hides from his Egyptian wife...

3. Another problem was about non-attested marriage certificates by Egyptian courts due to the ignorance of the married couples.

4. The financial burden the wives face due to the lack of financial help or alimony from husbands.

5. The claim of low alimony. The families who filed complaints lived in very poor financial condition.

Standards
Athari said the committee had the following information on such cases:

★ Eighty per cent of husbands were of old age, low education and financially not well-off.

★ Many of these husbands are nationalised or without nationality which is an obstacle for them to marry Kuwaiti women.

★ Many husbands were married before and are incapable of looking after their Egyptian wives and children.

★ Many husbands are suffering from psychological and physical problems.

About the Egyptian wives Athari said, the committee noticed the following:

★ 100 per cent of these wives belonged to very poor educational and financial standards which enticed them to marry old men for the sake of money.

★ A number of these wives were deported from Kuwait for moral crimes such as prostitution and adultery.

★ These wives have one or two children due to the short period of marriage.

★ Many of these wives are ignorant about their legal rights and their husbands' permanent address.

Another Arabic daily also published a report about the number of these cases (Egyptian women married to Kuwaitis and their children). This report appeared in Dec 1984 saying that there are 754 divorcees and widows in Egypt since 1980. A committee was formed from different ministries including Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs. On October 24, 1984, the committee received 43 cases out of 165 complaints from Egyptian wives against their Kuwaiti husbands, filed at the Kuwaiti embassy in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

An article published by the Egyptian newspaper "Al Joum-horiya" quoting another Kuwaiti daily on May 11, 1984, said that 500 Kuwaiti men aban-

doned their Egyptian wives cit-

ing some reasons such as:

★ Fear of discovery by those husbands by their Kuwaiti wives in Kuwait.

★ Another Kuwaiti youth was not recognised by his father as a result he worked as a servant for a foreign family.

The writer of this article con-

cluded with the comment: "These Kuwaiti fathers are afraid to get into trouble with their Kuwaiti wives here but they are not afraid to lose their children in Egypt and be responsible for their delinquency."

Recommendations

The issue (Kuwaitis, non-Kuwaiti wives and their children) was discussed by the cabinet which formed a committee and formulated a plan to implement the following:

★ Solve these problems abroad by companies or through courts and secondly to apply new

regulations to decrease the number of such incompatible marriages.

Official concern grew when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote to the cabinet about the increase in the number of these complaints.

Thus on June 17, 1984, the cabinet issued a decree forming a committee to follow these cases and undertake a field visit to Egypt to obtain first hand information.

When the committee finished its research, comprehensive reports were submitted to the concerned ministries.

On Nov 15, 1984, an Arabic daily quoting a source at the Ministry of Justice said that a decision not allowing Kuwaiti men to marry non-Kuwaiti women applies only to old men and those who were married before.

On Feb 11, 1985 another

Arabic daily said that the cabinet has approved the following permanent regulations on organising marriages between Kuwaiti men and non-Kuwaiti women inside or outside Kuwait:

★ Compel Kuwaiti men to pay alimony for their children and wives residing outside the country with the co-ordination of the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs to assure that those wives and children received the money.

★ A permanent committee was formed to execute these regulations from different concerned ministries.

★ Divorce certificates are only given to the husband with the personal attendance of the wife in the presence of the judge to assure her receiving the paper.

★ Not to cancel the residence of any divorced woman married to Kuwaiti unless she is assured of getting all her rights from her husband.

There is no other one like it

Hejaz railway alive again

DAMASCUS, Syria, (AP): Railway carriages that escaped Lawrence of Arabia's desert raids in World War I are again clattering along the old Hejaz Railway, built by the Ottomans' last ruler to carry pilgrims to Makkah.

The peeling wood and rattling windows of the 80-year-old carriages testify to the history of the line and to the regional turmoil that has kept modernization at bay.

Jordan and Syria resumed a weekly service on the 138-mile (222-kilometre) stretch between Amman and Damascus in October after an eight-year interruption.

The engines are modern diesels. But the Belgian-built carriages and most of the track were used when the line was built. They are some of the oldest still in use for a regular passenger service, rather than as a tourist attraction.

"There's no other one like it," said Friedrich Pichler, a widely travelled Austrian railroad consultant who made the eight-hour trip to Damascus just to ride the train. It's like people felt in the 20s," he said.

The fare, too, can prompt nostalgia: about \$3.50 first class and \$2.10 for second class.

The Turkish Sultan Abdel-Hamid conceived the line to ferry Muslim pilgrims on the annual haj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, (PBUH), as well as to cement his rule over the Ottoman Empire's Arab provinces.

Construction on the German-engineered line started in 1900 in Damascus. It ended in Medina, in what is now Saudi Arabia, eight years and 810 miles (1,303 kilometres) later.

Turnout in Turkey and the outbreak of World War I ended plans to extend the line to Makkah.

Marauding Arab rebels accompanied by the British officer T.E. Lawrence, the legendary "Lawrence of Arabia," repeatedly raided the line during the war to block Turkish supplies.

British Maj. Sir Hubert Young, who accompanied Lawrence, later wrote:

"Nothing seemed to give him greater pleasure than the squat down less than 200 yards (metres) from the railway line ... and watch with complete unconcern the slow approach of a train full of Turkish soldiers."

"As soon as the engine was over the undisciplined mine, he would jam down the knob of the exploder, retire to his waiting camel and ride away, hotly pursued by the fire of any soldiers who might have escaped from the rear carriages."

The wrecked trains that Lawrence derailed and bridges he damaged, remarkably preserved in the dry desert air, still can be found along the old line. The remains are mainly in southern Jordan and Saudi Arabia, where passenger service on the Hejaz stopped years ago.

The track that once carried pious pilgrims now ferries phosphate on rebuilt lines through

southern Jordan to the port of Aqaba.

The original track north of Amman forces engineers to hold speeds to 50 kilometres an hour (31 mph) on straight and 35 kph (21-1/2 mph) on curves as the train traces the edge of the vast Arabian desert.

It rattles through empty vistas of arid land, past encampments of goat-hair bedouin tents fragrant with brushwood smoke from fires for brewing tea, past ruined Ottoman watering stations built of stone.

In towns, the rare passage of a train briefly halts normal life.

Men and women wave from balconies. Soccer players interrupt their games. Mobs of shrieking children dance and race the horn-blasting train — and sometimes throw stones at it.

The trip is still a novelty as well to the unusually friendly customs and immigration officials.

At the Syrian entry station of Deraa, no bankers awaited foreigners to exchange currency.

So cheerful police packed the only two Westerners into the back of a jeep and raced them 3-1/2 miles (6 kms) to an exchange post. The officers had to push-start their vehicle on the return leg.

The future of the eccentric service is in doubt, however. It seems history is at war with economics.

Railroad officials say it would be too expensive to renovate the weather-beaten wooden cars, whose squeaking wall panels sometimes wiggle independently of their neighbours.

The odd, small size of the track also makes it impossible to carry much freight or trains from standard 143.5-centimetre gauge tracks used elsewhere.

For the Hejaz Railway, the Turks matched a unique 105-centimetre narrow gauge used accidentally on an earlier French line from Beirut to Damascus.

"It should have been 1,065 millimetres, but someone cut the sleepers (track supports) to the wrong width and for reasons of saving money ... it was decided to build the line to fit them instead of sending for new ones," said Geoffrey Freeman Allen, editor of Jane's World Railways in London.

Marwan Hadawi, general director of Syria's branch of the railroad, said Damascus is preparing the roadbed for a new standard-gauge track to the Jordanian border.

The Syrians also are considering using more modern Hungarian passenger cars to replace the ancient Belgian cars on the run to Amman. The Hungarian cars already serve Damascus and Deraa daily.

A 1981 study by German consultants proposed replacing the whole system with a modern, standard-gauge line. But the \$3 billion to \$4 billion price tag means that project is at best far in the future.



An employee of Czechoslovakia's Hotel Praha descends the grand marble staircase with crystal chandelier. (Reuter wirephoto)

Exclusive Prague hotel opens its doors to tourists

A veil of mystery lifted from communists' palace

PRAGUE, (Reuter): A Prague hotel so exclusive that not even a visiting millionaire could book a room has thrown open its imposing doors and plans to go commercial.

For eight years a veil of mystery has hung over the Praha Hotel, property of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and reserved for the exclusive use of its officials and visiting foreign dignitaries.

But now it has been opened to outsiders, ending one of many taboos swept away weeks of popular unrest that has forced the party to relinquish its monopoly on power.

Inside the Praha's doors are palatial suites, a luxury sports centre and a cinema for officials to enjoy private screenings of Western films they had banned

for the public.

Hundreds of liveried staff glide noiselessly through its long corridors, but because of the severe restrictions on entry there has rarely been a guest to be seen.

"Now things will be different," manager Jan Dite told Reuters in his first interview with a Western correspondent. "We'll have to get used to it."

Management said the hotel, built in 1981 at an undisclosed cost, would go commercial at the beginning of next year — although it would remain property of the party.

Ordinary rooms will cost about \$100 a night, enough to burn a hole in the pockets of Westerners and certainly beyond the reach of ordinary Czechoslovaks.

But the move is at least a con-

cession to opposite demands that party members forfeit privileges that include not only use of the hotel but also special health care and access to hidden stores stocked with luxury meats and dairy goods.

Manager Dite admitted the hotel has been losing money since it was built but would not say how much. "We were subsidised from the party's budget. Our average occupancy rate has been less than 50 per cent," he said.

The horseshoe-shaped building is six storeys high and more than 100 metres (yards) long.

The sun shines on the tropical garden in its central atrium. Rooms balconies — all of which face south — offer an exquisite view of the once royal Hradcany Castle and chandeliers light its grand marble staircase.

The 116 rooms with terrace gardens include 32 "small" and eight "presidential" suites. A small suite is actually bigger than many family apartments in Prague. The manager graciously declined to show any of the presidential suites.

The hotel can sleep 200 people and employs a staff of 350, Dite said.

Facilities include a circular indoor swimming pool, a well-used bowling alley, pool tables, a sauna, tennis and volleyball courts, a beauty shop, a cinema and a massage parlour.

But its miles of wood-paneled, hundreds of black leather armchairs and public rooms resembling vast caverns excude the grim, moody atmosphere of a place that is too big and too empty.

Only during party congresses and on other special occasions has the building ever come to life.

The hotel then teemed with officials. Fleets of chauffeur-driven Tatra limousines would wait outside to take them to the congress venue, the Palace of Culture, another huge structure nicknamed "Moby Dick."

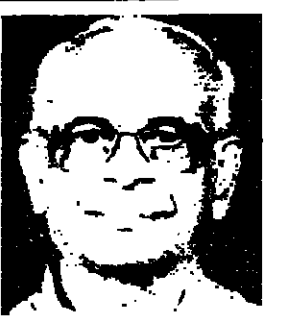
For years locals eyed the hotel, built on the site of a former public park, with a mixture of awe and resentment.

They told tales of 18 underground floors, private lifts to suites, a secret tunnel from the underground railway terminal nearby, wild parties and call-girls.

But none of the stories could ever be verified as outsiders could not enter the gates guarded by armed plainclothes security to see for themselves.

Welcome to 'Air America' — 'The Secret War' in Laos

'We're not here, so what you and I just saw, didn't happen'



S.B. Nair (Appu Nair)
68 years

Husband of Mrs Radha Nair
Father of (Late) Ashok Nair
Aji Nair, Anur Nair &
Shanti Nair

Passed away after brief illness at the Amiri Hospital on 12.12.89

For further information contact: 5651418

Inserted by sorrowing family & friends

MAE HONG SON, Thailand, (AP): A crippled C-123 lies on an airstrip flanked by sandbagged bunkers, stacks of ammunition and fighters in fatigues. Nearby, a field of colourful opium poppies can be seen swaying in the breeze.

Flying into this remote town ringed by jungled mountains seems an eerie descent into the Indo-China war, and two decades back in time.

On closer inspection, the howitzer shells prove to be of wood; the crashed military transport is a hollow fake, while 110,000 silk and polyester flowers make up the field of "opium."

And the blue-eyed macho type running out of a bar that has just been skewered by a hunk of

exploding airplane wing happens to be Australian film star Mel Gibson.

Welcome to "Air America," Hollywood's recreation of the mayhem and political machinations known as "The Secret War" in Laos.

In real life, Air America was owned by the US Central Intelligence Agency. In Laos, it supported the Vietnamese government and an army of CIA-paid Hmong tribal people who battled the communist Pathet Lao and its North Vietnamese allies.

Grizzled veterans of conflicts past and retired military pilots from the war in neighbouring Vietnam flew for this secret shuttle service. They carried guerrillas, refugees, rice, ammunition and even opium.

The pilots were variously described as mercenaries, patriots and "the finest bunch of airplane drivers that has ever been got together anywhere." They flew — and sometimes died — by the motto "anything anywhere anytime."

The film focuses on the relationship between two pilots, played by Gibson and Robert Downey Jr., as they fight, drink and whore in a bizarre war that officially doesn't exist.

"We're not here, so what you and I just saw didn't happen," a CIA man lectures Gibson, who has vainly tried to rescue a fellow pilot, Charlie, from a burning plane. Moments earlier, the film shows US president Richard Nixon announcing on television that America was not militarily

involved in Laos.

"It may not have happened to you, and it may not have happened to Nixon but it sure as hell happened to Charlie," Gibson replies.

Director Roger Spottiswoode said he hoped the movie would work as an adventure film featuring aerial stunts and darkish humour along with political undertones.

Gibson, the director said, plays an outwardly cynical veteran flier "who has made his uneasy peace with a world he knows is corrupt." Downey portrays a younger man fresh from Los Angeles who balks at compromise and rebels when he discovers that he has unwittingly been ferrying opium.

Some Air America veterans

have grumbled to the producers that they would be depicted as a bunch of drug runners and that the story of the secret war would be distorted. The CIA has had no comment.

But while an earlier, discarded script reportedly was studded with black humour and sharp slants on the war, the "political guts were torn out" of the final script and the pilots are portrayed as heroes, a film source said.

The final version goes lightly on the official American conduct of the war in Laos, which included secret bombings, a string of lies and the CIA's helping hand in the marketing of opium for its hilltribe allies.

A great deal of effort, however, has gone into recaptur-

ing the look and atmosphere of 1971 Laos.

The film-makers relied in part on the non-fiction book "Air America" by Christopher Robbins as well as archival material and interviews with Indo-China war veterans, some of whom have settled in Thailand and taken small parts in the film.

Under producer Daniel Melnick, the movie marshals a force of 26 aircraft, about 1,700 crew and extras and a budget of \$35 million.

Northern Thailand was chosen for more than two months of shooting because of its resemblance to the same tribal groups live on both sides of the border, and opium, from which heroin is refined, is still grown in

both countries.

Production designer Allan Cameron dressed up sections of Chiang Mai, the major city of northern Thailand, to resemble the Laotian capital of Vientiane. Bar girls were brought up from Bangkok to the recreated white rose, a pilot hangout in Vientiane.

Mae Hong Son proved strikingly similar to Long Tieng, a CIA-run base that mushroomed into the second largest city in Laos. Its existence was publicly known, but details of what went on there were closely guarded.

For the movie, three hangars, a hospital, warehouse and operations centre were built at Mae Hong Son's once sleepy airport. The Thai military provided the aircraft and extra pilots.

Divorce and parental kidnapping turn kids into emotional cripples

By Jadranka Porter
Arab Times staff

FROM Washington to Kuwait, doctors, parents and legislators speak of the devastating effect on children of in and out-of-court battles parents wage for custody, to emotionally win their offspring, or simply for revenge.

The divorce itself, and even more drastic parental kidnapping, can turn the children into emotional cripples, criminals and drug addicts; warn those who have dealt with such cases.

Untold damage and pain is inflicted on the victims of parental kidnapping said Jim Schuffreider, legislative assistant to Senator Alan Dixon of Illinois, the US lawmaker who is fighting against abduction of American children to foreign countries by their non-American parent.

Most abducting parents, overcome by rancor after having lost the court battle for custody, would resort to any tactic to win the child, he explained.

"The abducting parent would tell his child, your mother doesn't love you, she doesn't want you, which is in almost all cases not true. The effect on the child is devastating. This is something that cannot be forgotten," said Schuffreider.

Kuwaiti clinical psychologist Dr Marwan S. Al Mutawa, who has worked with children from broken marriages, puts it in starker terms: "Some of these children are living a nightmare." He says the emotional blackmail that some divorcing parents resort to can lead to schizophrenia, paranoia, and lifelong



Dr. Marwan S. Al Mutawa

emotional scars in children as they watch the ugly tug-of-war in which their parents — their models until yesterday — come crashing down.

Victims

In mixed marriages, the cultural differences between parents, once glossed over, now, at the time of divorce loom large and children are not only torn between the mother and father but also the values they stand for.

The saddest part is that they are the most severely affected, victims trapped in a situation they are not responsible for and they cannot fully comprehend.

"The first reaction of children faced with a split between their parents is confusion," says Dr Marwan. "They ask me it is really a disaster, will it go away, and why is my mother not living with us any more?"

Agony of a girl who hasn't seen mother for 17 years

THE end of any marriage is a heartbreaking ordeal for both husband and wife, but it is the children who are the most tragic victims of lost love. Their ordeal is particularly painful when their divorced parents live half a world apart.

Mary (not her real name) hasn't seen her mother for 17 years. Her British mother left the Gulf when Mary was an infant.

Now an attractive and bright teenager, Mary started searching for the mother she has never known about three years ago. "I want my mother," Mary says simply. But after talking to relatives and government agencies and travelling to

England to find her mother, Mary came home empty-handed. Family members, old neighbours and government and social welfare agencies in both the Gulf and Britain were either unwilling or unable to help her.

"Nobody wants to help," she said. And there were no signs of her mother. "Sometimes I think she died."

When Mary began to look back into her mother's past she did find some clues. She knows her mother married young and that she took Mary and her older sister back to England with her when the marriage began to fall apart.

But Mary, just one and a half years old, and her sister, a toddler at the time, were kidnapped by her grandfather and brought back to the Gulf.

An innocent victim in an international tug-of-war, Mary is angry, hurt and confused. She is wondering if her mother doesn't want to be found.

"Maybe she doesn't want me," Mary said. "Maybe she has another life with another man."

As far as Mary can tell, her mother made efforts to contact her children, but "everyone tells me my mother is afraid. My mother is

being stopped."

Besides the heartbreak of never knowing her mother, Mary faced other problems throughout her childhood.

Because she is half English and half Arab, she feels ostracised by relatives, teachers and her peers.

"All the girls in school talk about me," she said. "They think I am not a good Muslim."

As far as Mary is concerned her Arab relatives are fighting her efforts to find her mother. "They think if my mother comes back no one will take me. They think I will not get married. I want my mother."

Tug of love drama in UAE

ONE of the most conspicuous parental disputes over custody of children took place in the United Arab Emirates last year. Five-year-old Nadine, daughter of Irish nurse Ann McManus, was awarded custody by an Irish court, was taken to the Gulf state by the father who won custody in a Jordanian court.

This prompted a kidnap attempt, by two of McManus' friends, that was foiled by the UAE police. The Irishmen, who were sentenced to a jail term, are now free and Nadine is in the care of her father, Dr Sameer Nasser. In the summer of 1988, Dr Sameer picked up Nadine in Dublin, where she lived with her mother, on the pretext of taking her on a two-week holiday.

While Nadine was on holiday in the Middle East with her father, a Jordanian court awarded him custody and both of them went to live in the United Arab Emirates.

Ann McManus was devastated. But she had some very sympathetic and enterprising friends, among them Denis Denehy, 28, and Gerard Flynn, 25. The pair received about £2,000 for travelling expenses from McManus and set out on what they would later call a "humanitarian mission".

They arrived in Dubai in September 1988 and headed straight for Dr Sameer's home. They bound and gagged Dr Sameer and his Filipino wife. They grabbed the girl, placed her in a rented car and sped to Dubai International Airport. The men played the young girl a tape in which her mother pleaded with her to return to Dublin.

But Dr Sameer managed to free himself and alert the police. The Irishmen were intercepted just before they reached the airport. They were detained on kidnapping charges. The child was sent back to her father's care.

The UAE authorities charged McManus and the two Irishmen with the kidnapping of Nadine, they accused McManus of providing them with information and assistance.

Flynn and Denehy claimed in court that they had been motivated by "humanitarian reasons" and not money. "Our only aim was to reunite Nadine with her mother," Flynn told a court on Khor Fakkan, the UAE. He said that McManus had played them a tape of a telephone conversation with her husband in which he told her he would rather see Nadine dead than return her and that was when they decided to get involved.

Last March the two Irishmen were each sentenced to two years imprisonment in the Emirates. Denehy and Flynn were also fined 11,000 dirhams each and McManus was sentenced in absentia to a fine of 5,800 dirhams and banned from visiting or working in the country.

Move against abduction

The Dixon bill

By Jadranka Porter
Arab Times staff

SINCE 1975, the US State Department has recorded more than 2,700 cases of international child abduction by parents. Every single one is a heart-wrenching story that left in its trail helpless victims — children.

Distressed by their plight, and in particular a "tragic" case involving a child kidnapped from Ireland, married to a man who has been married more than three years ago.

"The victims of this crime are children from each and every state of this country, who have been abducted by one of their parents and detained in countries around the world," said Dixon at the beginning of his campaign.

Then he went into action. Two pieces of legislation introduced by Dixon, getting the US government to assist the American parents whose children have been abducted, were passed in 1987 and 1988.

The third and perhaps the most important one, which makes international parental abduction a federal felony punishable by a fine and/or up to three years in prison, is now before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The bill, if passed, will not put an end to parental child abduction, nor will it authorise the FBI agents to chase the violators across the US borders. Even if the abductor returns to the US he would not be automatically liable to prosecution. Only the American parent, if he or she is a lawful custodian of the child, would be able to raise charges against the abductor.

But the proposed legislation will provide another weapon in the fight against abduction, Dixon's legislative assistant Jim Schuffreider told the Arab Times in a telephone interview. "Passage of this legislation will strengthen the hand of the United States in dealing with foreign governments for the return of the children, as well as serve as a deterrent to future abductors," said Dixon in a letter to the New York Times two months ago.

International parental child abduction is currently not a federal crime in the US. With the passage of this bill it would be added to a category of crimes considered kidnapping. "If we don't consider it a crime how can we expect foreign governments to look at it with seriousness," Schuffreider asked rhetorically.

And the co-operation of foreign governments with the State Department is of crucial importance to American parents seeking the return of their kidnapped children through official channels. The only other option they have is private investigators. This, however, is risky and may end up in disaster.

The State Department has been negotiating with some 45 foreign governments in an attempt to secure the return of the US of American children who have been abducted by one of their parents, in 90 per cent of cases by the father.

This is a far cry from a situation two years ago when, in Dixon's words, the State Department operated as "the world's largest legal services referral office, telling a parent whose child has been stolen away to contact a lawyer in the country to which the child has been taken."

Once the children are taken out of the United States, their rightful custodians face an impossible task to have their children returned, reported Dixon in 1987.

"In virtually every case, the country to which the child is illegally taken, whether ally or enemy, has refused to honour the decision of an American court, and return the child to the parent having legal custody of the child in the United States," Dixon then told the Senate.

However, thanks to Dixon's efforts, there have been improvements. In 1987, the senator successfully launched legislation to set up a desk at the State Department to work solely on the international parental abduction cases.

"This issue used to have such a low priority that no one was working on it. The parents were getting no attention," said Schuffreider.

Dixon also elicited an agreement from the State Department to assign one officer in each of its embassies and consular offices to be responsible for child abduction cases.

The following year he scored another success — he was responsible for passing the legislation to implement the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Parental International Child Abduction.

The first act entitles American parents, whose children were illegally taken out of America, to the US government help. The second paves the way for the State Department to negotiate with other governments, with greater authority, the extradition of the abductor then at least of the child.

Although the Hague Convention does not provide for the enforcement of foreign custody decrees, it does set up procedures to ensure the prompt return of children who are illegally taken to or retained in a ratifying state. The problem is that only 14 countries in the entire world have ratified the convention. None of the Arab states are among them.

Nevertheless, as Dixon predicted two years ago, once the US has formally adopted the convention and raised specific cases with foreign governments, a better response can be expected and in fact was received from them.

Schuffreider reports that since the US ratified the convention a number of cases have been solved including some involving Canada, a signatory state. West Germany and Italy, which have not adopted the convention, but which together with Mexico, top the list of countries abducted American children are taken to, have responded to the State Department appeals for co-operation, he added.

In entirely separate category

are countries, such as the Middle Eastern states, that have not adopted the convention and have sizeable cultural, religious and legal differences with the US.

"The Middle East is the most difficult and emotionally sensitive area for us because their laws are based on religious principles," said a State Department spokesman.

Comparing the Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian, and US legal systems, Schuffreider said in a gross understatement: "Our systems of law are not absolutely compatible."

How incompatible they are can be seen from Dixon's three-year-long and so far unsuccessful battle, to get the two daughters of his constituent Patricia Roush back from Saudi Arabia where they have been taken by their Saudi father Khalid Al Ghesayan despite a US court order.

"I cannot accept this," cried Dixon in despair in the Senate. "I believe the Saudi government can and must do something about these two young American girls currently being held hostage in Saudi Arabia.... While we must accept the reality that different nations maintain divergent legal systems, I find the specifics of this case grossly unfair."

Dixon continues to work with the State Department to press the case with the Saudi government while Patricia Roush is said to be attempting some of her own measures.

Her case is only one of some 250 parental kidnappings involving abductions to Middle Eastern countries according to the State Department records. Of these more than 90 have been resolved. This means that either the child was returned to the American parent by whatever means, or the child turned 18 and is now an adult.

Fewer American children have been abducted to Kuwait than any other of the six countries in the Middle East featuring on the State Department list dated Feb 1988. Of the total of 29 cases, 14 have been resolved and six have been classified as dormant. This year the number of ongoing cases, negotiated by the State Department and the Kuwaiti government, has risen from 9 in 1988 to 12. The State Department refuses to discuss the cases to protect the privacy of those involved.

The US embassy in Kuwait says it has few inquiries from the State Department and even fewer pleas for help from distraught American women. There are an estimated 300 American women married to Kuwaitis but the embassy receives only about five appeals for help per year.

According to Dixon's office American authorities are better placed to help American citizens and US passports for the children of US nationals can be obtained at the embassy.

Its role in helping the American parents, aside from the welfare and whereabouts checks, is difficult to assess precisely.



Abductors from US to be in trouble

Kidnapping bill awaits Hill vote

By Jadranka Porter
Arab Times staff

THE bill proposed by Senator Alan Dixon of Illinois, United States, to punish parental kidnapping as a federal crime with a fine and/or up to three years in prison, is awaiting a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

If most of the committee's 15 members approve, the bill will go before the Senate where it needs a majority vote to become law.

The law would make little difference for divorced mixed couples and their children living in Kuwait, where they are under the jurisdiction of local laws. It will not affect parents who abduct American children from Kuwait to the US.

But parents who have unlawfully taken their children out of the US to Kuwait, and who intend to return to the US, even if only for a visit, will be affected. They could be prosecuted in the US if their American (former) spouse files parental abduction charges or may have to strike a bargain, namely return the abducted child to the lawful custodian in return for which he or she would drop the charges. If abductors are the fathers, which

usually they are, they would not be pressed by Kuwaiti authorities, as the State Department would want them to be, to settle the case as per the American court order.

Dixon's bill says that anyone who takes a child (a person under the age of 18) out of the United States without the consent of the lawful custodian, or does so against a court order which precludes the child from leaving the country will be liable for prosecution.

A valid court order is only the one issued by an American court. If the abducting parent gets a court order of custody from his country it is unlikely to be recognised in American courts especially if the couple lives in the US, explained Dixon's legislative assistant Jim Schuffreider.

"In this case the US would appeal to the Kuwaiti government to recognise the American court order," said Schuffreider. If the reverse happened, he said he expected the Kuwaiti government to ask the US to respect a decree issued by a Kuwaiti court. "If an American mother abducted her child to the US in violation of a Kuwaiti law the US

would view that act as avoiding the Kuwaiti court decision," Schuffreider said.

She need hardly worry about that. As she would not be breaking any of the American laws, which are in any case different to the point of being in conflict with the corresponding code in Kuwait, she won't be held accountable in the US. There is no way in which the US can force Kuwait, or vice-versa, to recognise and enforce its court orders.

Dixon's bill further mandates that the removal of the child without the mother's consent by the person whose paternity has not been established shall be a federal crime. If the child was born out of wedlock the child can be removed from the US only with the mother's consent. The bill says that a parent has no right to take the child out of the US after filing for a divorce or any process affecting the marriage and before a court order of custody has been issued. If custody has not been determined and a parent removes the child from the US by force, or conceals the child outside the US without informing the other parent of the child's whereabouts within 30

days, he or she will face charges of abduction.

Anyone who helps a person to illegally take a child out of the US shall be guilty of child abduction as well, the bill says.

The defendant could be cleared of charges if he was in possession of a valid court order of legal custody or visitation rights. If the defendant failed to return the child after the visitation period to the lawful custodian, due to unforeseen circumstances but attempted to inform the other parent, the defense counsel may have an easier job in defending his or her client. It will also be in the defendant's favour if he can prove that he, and the child, were running away from domestic violence.

However, aggravating the defendants' position would be actions such as abusing or neglecting the child, inflicting physical harm on the child or lawful custodian, and demanding payment in exchange for return of the child. A more severe punishment would also be meted out against defendants who have previously been convicted of state or federal child abduction.

To be continued tomorrow

EVENTS

Indian Video Roundup

'Gawahi': who killed the tycoon?

By Fathima Ahmed
Arab Times staff

NOT a hopeless situation, after all. Cinema, it seems, can still come up with a watchable movie, occasionally. It takes courage to break off from tradition and try out new ideas, and make them work. Director Anant Balani's telefilm *Gawahi*, shot in three months, does just that. It works,

in terms of narration, living up to the suspense it creates in the opening scene.

The curtain rises on the death of a man; he jumps from the roof of a high-rise building. He is identified as business tycoon Ranjit Choudhury, a man who worked his way up the corporate ladder, breaking some rules in the process. Was it suicide or

murder?

Ranjit is successful, wealthy and youthful — not the profile of a man who commits suicide. The blame falls on his pretty mistress, Janvi Kaul (Zeena Aman), who has every motive to do away with him. Ranjit jilts her, marrying Shashi (Ranjita Kaur), daughter of a powerful businessman. Did she or didn't she kill the tycoon? A whodunnit, set in court, it sustains interest for most part of the film.

Millionaire-businessman Ranjit Choudhury is an enigma, a mystery, a man of many moods. His character unfolds through dialogue, and cross-questioning and flashbacks. Is he innocent or guilty? Is he a saint or a devil? Who is he?

His mistress, Janvi Kaul, is as intriguing as the man himself. A woman with a shady past, Janvi is in the docks for her links with a married man. Not a typical Indian woman, she has broken all social rules to live with the man. Does she love him? Or did she hate him enough to kill him?

Balani, who has also scripted *Gawahi*, does away with trivia and relies on dialogue, and fine camera angles to build suspense, before he shatters the illusion. There is a fine twist in the tale that takes you by surprise. Although not perfect, it is far better than many so-called thrillers thrown down the conveyor-belt in Bombay.

Zeena Aman, who had semi-

retired after marriage, makes a comeback. Svelte and perky at 40, she plays Janvi more naturally than she ever did in the mainstream cinema.

Sikka

Bombay filmmakers can't resist formulas. Take *Sikka* for example. It relies on all the formulae in the book, hoping to hoodwink viewers by passing off *Sikka* as a mystery thriller. It's certainly not a thriller. Perhaps, it is a revenge drama with an unusual twist.

It's the story of two friends, Vijay (Dharmendra and Prem), bosom — rather golf — pals. Even falls from grace when Vijay discovers his nefarious activities. Prem's hatred grows against the death of his only son. Vijay is in big trouble — so are the viewers, reeling by the romantic pair Shobha (Dimple Kapadia) and Jackie Shroff).

In the tradition of the 1950s and 1960s cinema, a comic subplot unfolds with Kader Khan, Asrani and Aruna Irani clowning around for your benefit. It raises more questions than laughs.

The good-vs-evil theme is now so worn out that we need not ask who wins in the climax, when bullets fly and bombs explode, creating the illusion of Beirut on fire. In *Sikka*, it's just the bad guys having fun at the expense of our sensibilities.



Dharmendra

Despite the apparent flaws in the contrived narrative, there are some moments that reward your patience. For instance, Jackie's abominable behaviour toward Shobha, whom he supposedly loves. And, if you only get to see animals and insects, for a change, why not see the antics of humans in the concrete jungle?

The above films are by courtesy of Athar Video, Main St., Farwaniya, Tel: 471-2900.



Zeena Aman — the pretty mistress

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

KTV 1

MORNING PERIOD

9.30 The opening and Holy Quran
9.40 Sabah Al Kher, news and variety
10.00 Cartoon serial
10.15 Magazine D'Actualite (repetition)
10.30 Hawer Zaver: Local serial (Final part)
11.30 Sabah Al Kher, news and variety
12.00 Circus: Variety programme
12.30 News Summary
12.35 Holy Quran and Closedown

EVENING PERIOD

4.00 The opening and Holy Quran
4.15 The World Today via Satellite (repetition)
4.45 Breen: Cartoon serial
5.15 Football Lessons: sports programme
5.45 Night chemists, airlines and official advertisements
6.00 Al Islam Hadhara: religious programme (Final part)
7.00 Popular Features:

local programme, prepared and presented by Hmoud Al Baghi

7.45 Television Network: local programme, prepared and presented by Abdul Rahman Al Najjar
8.30 Good Evening and local news
9.00 News in Arabic
9.45 Al Manzel Al Khafi: Arabic serial (part 3)
11.30 Hikayat Al Wad Abbas: Arabic play, starring Waheed Saif, Fareeda Saif Al Naser and Sahar Rami

1.15 News Summary
1.20 The World Today via Satellite
1.50 Holy Quran and Closedown

KTV 2

6.00 Opening, announcement & Holy Quran
6.10 Voltron. A cartoon series for children
6.30 Danger Bay. Grant and Nicole are

NIGHT CHEMIST

Kuwait
Mujil Pharmacy
Abdulla Al Mubarak St.
Al Amin Pharmacy
Jaber Al Mubarak St.
Hawalli
Shamsan Pharmacy
Ibn Khaldoun St.

Salmiya
Al Rashid Pharmacy
Amman St.
Fahad
Adel Pharmacy
Awadi bldg.

Kheitan
Kheitan Pharmacy
Ibrahim Adham St.
Jahra
Najah Pharmacy
4th Area

shocked to find an abandoned truck loaded with toxic waste ... search for other trucks took place with the help of J.L. and skywatch...

7.00 Beyond 2000. Future US space programmes... Travel cost to outer inhabited space-ships... the effect of gravity on man...

8.00 News in English
8.30 The Great World Circus. The acrobatic family presents fantastic circus shows. Shows in water... and a variety of acrobatic and smash circus shows...

9.30 Wildlife On One. "The Bee-Team." A bird known as "Bee-Eater" lives in a very complicated society ever discovered by man...

10.00 Cine Club. Presented by Farook Abdulaziz. Nesveto (Vampire). Based on Count Dracula story...

12.00 News in Brief
12.15 Magazine D'Actualite

Please note that programmes and timings are liable to change without notice.

PRAYERS

Fajr	5.09 am
Zuhr	11.42
Asr	2.32 pm
Maghrib	4.54
Isha	6.13

CINEMA

Al Andalus
Arabic film
Salmiya
Hall booked
Al Hama
Arabic film
Drive-in
Arabic film
Al Firdos
Garibon Ka Daata
Fahad Open
Closed for winter
Fahad
Arabic film
Al Jahra
Chetanogga Choo Choo
Granada
Arabia
Salmiya
Good Morning Vietnam
Jeeb
Red Sonja
Ahmadi drive-in
Arabic film

played between the Brothers Club (red) and the Brothers (green) at the EPI cricket grounds on Friday, December 15. The match will start at 9.00 am. Other attractions include food stalls. All Bangladeshis are cordially invited. For food coupons contact Kamal on Tel. 4312949.

Ahmad Kart Race
AHMADI Kart Race meeting commences 1.30 pm Friday and includes a ladies' race. All are welcome. Entrance 500 fils only. Try out the new Rentakart full blown racing kart.

IAC table tennis
THE IAC table tennis tournament from Dec 29 till Jan 5. All members, their families and guests interested in participating please call IAC (Tel. 3904817) after 7 pm, or Jagdish at Tel. 2433552, or Sharma at Tel. 2644863 for entry passes and details.

Football Tournament
PEOPLE'S Trust Club tie-breaker football tournament for all Indian teams to commemorate Jawaharlal Nehru Centenary Year on 15th Dec. on Sour Ground at 8.30 am. Contact Dominic Rodrigues and Camilo.

ARTS

Seminar

THERE will be a seminar at the DAA on "Arabic & European Art in the Light of Zodiocal Symbolism" December 10, 1989 - January 10, 1990. Sunday and Tuesday 11.00 - 12.30 am. Anyone wishing to register for this seminar may do so at the DAA during museum hours.

Art exhibition

A SOLO art exhibition of Bangladeshi artist Rantu Acharyee will be opened on Dec 16, at 9.00 am at the Bangladesh embassy auditorium. The exhibition will continue till Dec 21.

SOCIAL

Adnan Butt
PAKISTAN Arts Circle will present Adnan Butt on Friday, December 15, 1989 at 6.30 pm, at Ramada Al Salam Hotel. Adnan Butt will sing his best Punjabi songs, ghazals and geets.

Zahid Saeed Khan, the ambassador of Pakistan will preside over the function. Or Riaz Ahmad Mahesar, will be the chief guest.
Invitation cards are available at the Pakistan embassy counter or with the public relations secretary (Tel. 4716258), Hamid Mahmood.

Kuwait Singers
"At this time of Year" is the theme of the Kuwait Singers annual seasonal concert which will be held on Wednesday, December 13 and Thursday, December 14 at 7.30 pm at the Gulf English School, Salwa. For ticket reservations contact 5384873 or 5382551.

AWL Annual Bazaar
THURSDAY December 14, 9.00 am - 6.00 pm: Beautiful handmade items will be on sale at the Regency Palace Hotel. Ideal for Christmas shopping.

British council

Yogi's first Christmas

Wednesday, 13 December at 6.00 pm; Thursday, 14 December at 10.30 am. 99 min.
Yogi and his little pal, Boo-Hoo, are usually hibernating during the Christmas season at Jellystone Lodge. But this year, they are awakened when Yogi's special friends gather together to help him celebrate his first Christmas. This is a happy event that you will remember for years to come.

Study in Britain
ARE you interested in studying AUTOMOBILE or AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING in Britain?

If you are then come and visit the British Council Education Office on 16 & 17 December, for information and advice about the many different courses that are available.

Canadian Women's League
XMAS PARTY: will be held on Friday December 15 from 4 pm to 7 pm in Jabriya. For information or maps call: 5315655 or 2563025.

People's Trust Club

DEC 29: People's Trust Club welcomes you to a day of your life at Ramada Al Salam (Marriott) Hotel. New Ballroom from 10.30 am onwards. Nimble feet, hungry palate, perfect blend of music and style. A get-together with buffet. Featuring Stepping Stones, Top Ranks, Perfect Strangers. There will be novelties and surprises galore.

Kalpaka's drama competition
Kerala Arts and Literature Promoting Association of Kuwait (Kalpak) is organising a Malayalam drama competition on 8th and 9th of February 1990.

One act plays of 40 minutes duration will only be considered for the competition. Prizes will be awarded for best drama, best script (only for amateur creations from Kuwait) best direction. Stage setting, best actor (Prem Nazir award) best actress & best child artist, from the selected entries.

Interested parties may send their applications along with a copy of the script to Varghese Parayalil, P.O. Box 47, 13001 Safat Kuwait.

For more details please contact Varghese 5635481, Kurien 5658072 or Balakrishnan 4316737.

Punjabi Adabi

THE monthly meeting of Punjabi Adabi Sangat will be held on Dec 14, Thursday at 8.00 pm at the residence of Jagdish Singh Arora in Abbaaya. Kidar Nath Kedar and Gurubaksh Singh Dogra will present their short story and poem respectively for criticism. Before recitation of poetry by the participating poets an introduction of renowned Punjabi poet Piers Singh Sehrai's new book will be presented by Jasbir Singh Dhiwan.

Skyline Nite

SKYLINE Institute of Boodai Aviation will celebrate Nite on December 14, 8.00 pm at SAS Hotel (Tent). Nite will have lots of fun, music, variety of entertainment and lucky draws....

To avoid disappointment, please call for your early booking on Tel. 2412308-2408667 Housni Al Samadi

Konkani Drama

THE New Goans Overseas Association are pleased to announce Menino De Bandar's "Sonsarant Astana Diat" a Konkani play which will be held in the Indian Arts Circle (Funaites) on the 16th of February 1990. The cast all from Goa includes M. Boyer, C. D'Silva, Betty Naz, Junior Rod, Rosario Dias. Plans open in early January.

Southerners

DEC 22: Southerners invite their members and guests to celebrate X'mas family get-together at the Ramada Al Salam Hotel (the new Al Mirage Ballroom) to the excellent music by Top Ranks and Mr Leo's Magic Show. Santa Claus will be distributing gifts to all kids and other attractive gifts to prize winners. Fun and entertainment for entire family starting from 10am on December 22, 1989. For passes contact Ligory on 2425705 or 2412444.

KOSA meeting

KOSA Annual General Meeting - 17 December 7.30 pm Shaab Marina. All members should attend to elect the 1990 committee. For further details please call the KOSA Secretary Declan Mannion on 2452880.

Music Night

MUSIC Night at "The Lonesome Traveller." A musical evening in a cafe atmosphere featuring performers from the Kuwait Folk Group performing British traditional music, folk, pop and country songs. The evening is being produced by ACT and will provide you with a unique night out. It is being held December 17th at 8.00 pm at the Holiday Inn. For more details, call 5620332 from 5.00 to 7.00 pm.

X'mas tree '89

CHRISTMAS is for children, and what better way than to celebrate it with the New Goans Overseas Association at the Ramada Al Salam Hotel (the new Al Mirage Ballroom) on the 15th of December 1989. Highlights include 'carol singing competition' (4 local schools participating) games for children, novelty dance and music by the Stepping Stones. Santa Claus will be distributing gifts to all the kids. For reservations contact Anthony on tel: 5621968 (after 6.00 pm) or Julio.

Pongal celebrations

BHARATHI Kalai Mandram is organising Pongal Celebrations on 29th December in the Indian Arts Circle auditorium with a variety of entertainments for children and adults from 5 to 8.30 pm. All are welcome. For details and entry passes please contact 3716976, 5718935, 5631230 or 5627718.

NRI General Body Meeting
NRI Investors Forum holding annual G.B. meeting at Indian embassy on December 15 at 11.00 am. Investment speakers specially invited from India. Also presentation of NRI of the Year trophy. Followed by complimentary lunch for members.

Variety Show

UPKAAAR is a newly formed non-profit cultural group of Hindi/Urdu speaking expatriates in Kuwait. Upkaar, whose aim is to promote art, culture and literature is going to hold an inaugural variety entertainment programme at Al Sharq Co-operative Auditorium comprising of dances, dramas, musical items and pantomimes on December 15 at 6.00 pm. This will be followed by a buffet dinner. Interested persons may contact 4880965 or 2615515.

Victory Day flag hoisting

A flag-hoisting ceremony will be held on Dec 16, Saturday at 9.00 am to observe the Victory Day of Bangladesh. The ceremony will be held at the Bangladesh Embassy premises: House No. 3, Block 1, Street 14, Khaldiya. All Bangladeshis are requested to attend.

Cultural function

ON the occasion of Victory Day of Bangladesh, a cultural function will be organised by the Bangladesh Association on Friday, Dec 22, at 6.00 pm at the Sharq Co-operative auditorium. All Bangladeshis are invited to the programme.

IAC Children's Competition

THE dates of finals of the Children's Competition will take place at IAC Funaites on 13th, 14th, 15th, 27th and 28th December '89 and 18th January '90 respectively. For more details contact Indian Schools.

Kuwait Cultural Centre

NEW courses at the cultural centre: yogic healing classes, two sessions in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays; jujitsu (martial arts), Saturday and Mondays, pm; Chinese cooking classes, Saturdays, 9-11 am. For details call 5624393.

Saz Aur Aawaz

FEB 7: Saz Aur Aawaz, one of the leading Indian musical groups of Kuwait present their fourth musical programme entitled Bhule Bisle Geet. The show includes Hindi film songs at the Indian Arts Circle, Funaites on February 2, 1990. Passes will be available shortly.

Star Nite

DEC 21: Thursday Christmas dinner social at Ramada Al Salam Le Mirage Ballroom from 9 pm with Stepping Stones music. Variety entertainment and prizes galore for lucky 5 5 5 promotion and X'mas Hamper draws with sumptuous buffet at mid-night. Children's programme commences at 6 to 8.30 pm with Fancy Dress Competition.

For reservations please contact Vincent Tel. 2413706, James 5331940 also at Shop No. 34 A.M. Ex-New Super Market Kuwait.

Kuwait Little Theatre

KUWAIT Little Theatre, Ahmadi, proudly present their traditional pantomime extravaganza — Sinbad the Sailor. Tickets are now on sale for the following performances: Evening performances on 6th and 13th Dec at 7 pm. Matinee performances on 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th Dec at 2 and 5 pm. Ring 3919759 now to avoid disappointment.



Hansel and Gretel visit KIH

"Look at this house!" Gretel says. "We can eat it!" But this is a house found not only in the Hansel and Gretel story but at the Kuwait International Hotel. Children can eat and eat and no bad witch will come out. Rather, there is an ambience created for the season's festivities with Christmas logs, Christmas stollen, Christmas cookies, fruit beard and traditional treats.



Scholarship distribution & seminar

Scholarships for two young talented artists, in painting, Mumtas Mammykuty and Sadab Ayoub Youssef, were distributed at a meeting organised by Kalpak in the Indian Embassy Hall recently by Varghese Gee, the 1st Secretary of the Indian Embassy. The meeting was addressed by K.P. Balakrishnan (President of Kalpak) followed by speeches by Thomas Chandy (Patron of Kalpak), Hyderabad (Chairman, UMO) & Pandalam-Basheer (Adviser of

Kalpak). A symposium entitled "The Impact of Literature on the Socio-Cultural Development" followed the function. The theme was presented by Ali Vandoor of Kalpak, followed by a serious debate where about ten members representing various other cultural organisations actively participated. Moderators were Balan Nambiar and Swayamprapha Sugathan.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Western nations to review aid for Poland

BRUSSELS, Dec 12 (Reuters): Foreign ministers from 24 Western countries will review their \$1 billion aid for Poland and Hungary tomorrow but may stop short of an explicit commitment to extend the programme to other East bloc reformers.

A draft communiqué for the Brussels meeting, made available to Reuters today, says only that ministers will meet again when necessary "to give new political impetus to, or widen the scope of, their assistance in the light of new developments."

A European Economic Community summit last weekend referred to the possibility of extending the group of 24 programme to other East European countries as they follow Poland and Hungary down the road to democracy and free-market economies.

In West Berlin today, US Secretary of State James Baker said he favoured extending the programme, set up by the world's seven richest democracies at their summit last July when Poland and Hungary were alone in stripping away Communism.

"As Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic undertake political and economic reforms comparable to those already under way in Poland and Hungary, we believe the activities of the group of 24... should be expanded to support peaceful changes in those countries as well," he said.

But diplomats involved in preparing tomorrow's meeting, which the Polish and Hungarian foreign ministers will attend, said no one wanted to promise other countries that they could expect the same amount of help as the two pioneering reformers.

"We're really had to wring the towel dry to get the money for Poland and Hungary. We can't go back now and ask for more," said one.

The Brussels meeting, organised by the EEC's executive commission, brings together ministers from the 12 EEC countries, six other Western European nations, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey.

Diplomats said that some countries might choose to announce an increase in their aid efforts at the meeting — Japan is believed to be planning a larger contribution — but that major new initiatives were unlikely.

"They are here as a gesture of political support," one diplomat said.

Measures to boost market

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 12 (AP): The government announced special measures today aimed at preventing a possible crash of South Korea's tumbling stock market.

Among other measures, Finance Minister Lee Kyu-Sung pledged an unlimited supply of bank funds to investment trust companies buying stocks.

The action came as South Korea's key stock index dropped to 844 points Monday, the year's lowest level, after nine days of consecutive losses.

Lee said more foreign funds would be lured into the South Korea stock market, indicating an early opening of the domestic securities market to foreign investors. South Korea has been reluctant to open its capital market.

South Korea's stock market has been generally bearish since the composite stock price index hit a record high of 1,007 points in April.

Economic officials have launched a series of market-boosting measures, but the stock market has not responded because of the nation's overall economic sluggishness.

Angry investors have staged sit-ins and other protests at brokerage houses. Some protesters have fought employees at brokerage houses, denouncing the government's economic policy.

Plans to sign trade pact

MOSCOW, Dec 12 (Reuters): Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze will visit Brussels next week to sign a trade agreement with the European Economic Community, the official Tass news agency reported today.

The Soviet-EEC accord, granting trade concessions and setting a framework for future economic co-operation, was finalised last month.

Shevardnadze will be in Brussels on Dec 18 and 19.

Japan to give S. Yemen \$1.4m in aid

Bank of Tokyo seen active player in the market

This is the second part of the article "Japanese economy continues to grow faster." First part appeared in the Arab Times on Tuesday.

By M.C. Bosa
Business editor

CHAIRMAN of the board of directors of the Bank of Tokyo, Yusuke Kashiwagi was visiting Kuwait for two days to deliver a lecture on current topics on world and Japanese economies. The lecture, arranged by the Kuwait Forum, was held at the Kuwait International Hotel on Monday.

Kashiwagi highlighted the prospects of the world economy in particular and what Japanese economy can contribute to the world economy in 1990. He said that the Japanese economy continued to grow faster than the world economy in the past few years.

During his stay in Kuwait he met leading Kuwaiti businessmen and investment experts including Jassem Al Khorafi, Minister of Finance and Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah, governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

The Bank of Tokyo has always been an active and influential player in this dynamic market and the leader in yen-related instruments. In particular, we are strong in the development of innovative financial techniques, including the establishment of pricing models for look-back options (exercisable at the most favourable price during the option life), extinguishable options (terminable if the option

becomes out-of-the-money beyond the boundary) and Asian options (option on the average market price during the option life). With these impressive capabilities, and our world-wide swap network, we offer clients the most advanced financial services available.

Other activities

Project Finance. The Bank of Tokyo is a leading provider of asset-based financing for large-scale projects in such areas as energy, industry and real estate as well as basic infrastructure projects. We integrate commercial and investment banking capabilities into the comprehensive service packages needed to see large-scale regional and urban development projects to completion. These capabilities include feasibility studies, recruiting other investors, determining the optimum combination of financing methods and acting as overall financial co-ordinator and advisor for the project. Important international project financing agreements concluded during the term for which we will serve as co-ordinator included the County Hall Development Project in London, the Harbour Cogenation Project in Los Angeles, the Regent Park Executive Centre Project in San Diego, the Bosphorus Hotel in Istanbul and the New Century Hotel in Beijing.

The bank also applies its extensive experience in project finance to the rapidly growing number of urban and regional development projects in Japan. "We are a major participant in various plans for large-scale redevelopment of the Tokyo Bay



Yusuke Kashiwagi (centre) pictured with other participants.

waterfront, including the Tokyo International Financial Centre, a project proposed in co-operation with other major corporations to create a new financial centre in Tokyo in response to its rapidly growing status as a leading world financial centre. We will continue to play a key role in the development of this project," he said.

In addition to making constant efforts to manage risk, the bank strives at all times to enlarge its capital base to enable it to absorb unforeseeable risks or losses. "Last year, we issued 60 million shares of common stock amounting to ¥93.2 billion and

convertible bonds amounting to ¥70 billion, \$100 million and SFr500 million.

The Bank of Tokyo maintains a broadly diversified portfolio of investment securities. Management of these securities takes place under established investment limits for each type of security and currency involved.

The bank seeks to maintain broadly diversified sources of liquidity and to obtain extended maturities for its corporate debt. To guard against the possibility of a liquidity crunch, the bank strives to maintain an adequate cushion of liquid assets at all times.

With a broad range of specialised services provided through an international network of more than 300 locations, the bank is also Japan's foremost provider of international corporate banking services, including trade finance, local and offshore loans, multinational syndicated loans, overseas project finance and lease financing.

We also strengthened information links between our overseas offices to provide Japanese manufacturers expanding internationally with integrated advice and services, allowing them to maximise emerging international opportunities. We furnish

ish a full range of banking and financial support services to foreign enterprises seeking to enter the Japanese market; our Overseas Corporate Finance Division assists new market entrants by introducing prospective business partners and providing a wide array of essential business information," he added.

Agencies add: Japan is to give South Yemen aid worth 200 million yen (nearly \$1.4 million) to help boost wheat production, the official October 14 newspaper reported today.

It said the aid would comprise machinery, fertilisers, pesticides and spare parts.

Japan is expected to have the highest economic growth rate in the industrialized world next year, while growth in the United States, Canada and Britain is likely to be below the average for developed countries, a top trade official said today.

Arthur Dunkel, director-general of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, said the rate of increase in world trade was likely to slacken next year, even though 1990 would still mark the eighth consecutive year of expansion.

In the overview of developments in the international trading environment, Dunkel said progress toward trade liberalization since the current Uruguay round of trade-freeing negotiations began in 1986, protectionist pressures continued.

Presenting the report to the GATT council, Dunkel urged countries not to resort to unilateral or bilateral measures to settle trade disputes pending

agreement on new, more comprehensive international rules next December when the four-year Uruguay round ends.

He warned that such action would jeopardize the success of the negotiations.

Under a new section of its 1988 trade act, the United States in May singled out Japan, Brazil and India as having the worst restrictions against US exports and threatened retaliation if its grievances were not settled in bilateral talks.

The GATT report said the United States was certain this year to recapture the position it lost to West Germany in 1986 as the world's leading exporter in terms of the dollar value of merchandise sales.

In the first three quarters of the year, US merchandise exports grew by 15 per cent, more than double the dollar value increase recorded by Japan and West Germany, the report said.

However, the rate of expansion was down from 29 per cent in 1988. Combined with only a slight slackening of import growth from 9 per cent to 8 per cent, this meant that the reduction of the US trade deficit lost momentum, Dunkel said.

US exports in the first nine months of the year were worth some \$271.3 billion, while the value of imports totalled \$365.6 billion, according to GATT figures.

The report continued that prospects were "dim" for reducing the current account imbalances between major trading partners such as the United States, West Germany and Japan.

Oil prices will rise: Qatar

A lucky break for Opec, say experts

LONDON, Dec 12 (Agencies): Bitter cold in North America and Europe is supporting oil prices and giving Opec what some market analysts today called a lucky break.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries last month set a ceiling on future output higher than many pundits thought justified. But crude oil prices have risen on shortages of heating fuel.

More snow fell in the United States today. Early New York trading showed that futures for the US benchmark crude oil, West Texas Intermediate, were holding steady around \$20.70 per barrel — up \$1.50 since the Opec talks ended on November 28.

"I am buying this market," said Nauman Barakat, a vice-president with US trading house Shearson, Lehman Hutton. "If Opec was over-producing now, buyers would be deserting the market."

Barakat conceded that Opec

could not count indefinitely on cold weather to support production of between 23 and 24 million barrels per day (Bpd).

But lower Soviet exports, reflecting economic adjustment in the Soviet Union, may also push buyers in Opec's way. "I am looking for a dip in March or April but at this stage I see only a dollar or so off the barrel," Barakat said.

Geoffrey Pyne, energy economist with European Finance House UBS-Phillips and Drew, thought, however, that "the only factor holding crude prices up at the moment is gas oil."

Gas oil is the refined product chiefly used in heating fuel. Refiners up until about three weeks ago were tending to produce more gasoline than gas oil, of which supply is now tight following the arrival of the cold weather.

If the cold snap ends, Pyne said, energy prices generally could ease.

Meanwhile, the Amir of

Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, has predicted oil prices will gradually rise in the 1990s due to production cuts by some producing countries.

"The (oil) prices will rise again especially in the current expected circumstances... mostly reduction in production in some states," the Qatari News Agency quoted him as telling visiting Egyptian editors yesterday.

He did not name the countries but said "the rise in prices will be in stages," the agency said.

Qatar is a member of the 13-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) which last month agreed to raise the group's total output ceiling to 22.1 million Bpd in the first half of 1990 from 20.5 million.

The Amir said his country attached great importance to diversifying sources of national income to avoid dependence on oil alone.

World oil prices climbed Monday, led by a rise of nearly 4 cents

a gallon for heating oil in Europe as a result of continuing problems with Rhine river deliveries and Soviet exports.

Spurred by the European increase, US heating oil initially spurted up more than a penny a gallon on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

But prices fell back as traders took profits to reassess recent increases that has taken the "spread" between the prices of heating oil and the crude from which it is made to double its normal level.

Heating oil ended the day on the Merc at 66.95 cents a gallon, a gain of 0.38 cents. It had risen as high as 68.05 cents earlier in the session.

On the US Gulf Coast spot market, where crude is bought and sold for cash, WTI was also being quoted at \$20.70 a barrel, an increase of 25 cents.

The Merc spread between heating oil and crude, which is normally no more than \$3.75, rose to \$7.41.

Iraq and Saudis sign loan pact

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Dec 12 (AP): Iraq and Saudi Arabia have signed a \$40-million loan agreement under which the Saudi Fund for Development will finance the building of a 400-bed hospital in Basra, according to a senior Saudi official.

Muhammad Ben Abdulhadi Al Saqqar said today that the Saudi Fund may also loan Iraq an additional \$50 million to rebuild the city's electricity grid.

He said the will underwrite the entire financing of the new hospital, built to replace the municipal hospital badly damaged in the Gulf war.

The 20-year loan carries a 2 per cent service charge with a four-year grace period.

The agreement was signed Sunday by Al Saqqar, deputy chairman of the fund, and Iraq's Finance Minister, Muhammad Mehdi Saleh.

The project will be implemented by a state-owned company and is scheduled to finish in 1993. The city, 90 per cent damaged during the fierce fighting, has been substantially rebuilt.

Al Saqqar said the agreement had been reached on the loan for the electricity network in Basra, but no date had been set. Basra is Iraq's second-largest city and its main commercial port.

The Saudi Fund was set up in 1974 to offer soft loans for Islamic and other developing countries, but this is the first time it offered a loan to Iraq.

Tunisia sees lower balance of payment

TUNIS, Dec 12 (Reuters): Tunisia forecast today that its current account deficit would fall in 1990, with tourism and exports fuelling economic growth.

Prime Minister Hamed Karoui, in a budget speech to parliament, said higher tourism revenues and exports of agricultural produce and manufactured goods would more than offset declining foreign exchange from oil exports.

Imports, which rose sharply in 1988 and 1989, would start to level off. As a result the current account deficit would fall to 340 million dinars (\$360 million) from an estimated 370 million (\$395 million) this year.

The government budget deficit would be 387 million dinars (\$415 million), against 388 million (\$415 million) in 1989.

KD deposit rates ease

KUWAIT, Dec 12 (Reuters): Kuwaiti dinar interbank deposits generally eased in thin trade focusing on the short end of the market today as operators covered day-to-day positions.

Overnight funds declined 1/4 point, dealing at levels of eight, 7-3/4 per cent. Tomorrow-next eased 1/8 point to 8-1/4, eight. Spot-next was steady at 8-3/8, 1/8 while one week slipped to 8/12, 5/16 from 8-5/8, 3/8.

Quotes for the one-year dropped to 8-1/4, eight from 8-7/16, 3/16, partly on expectations Kuwaiti interest rates will decline in 1990.

First Egyptian plane lands in Damascus

Air link good for business

DAMASCUS, Dec 12 (Reuters): Syria gave a warm welcome today to the first Egyptian airliner to land in Damascus for 10 years, marking a thaw in relations between the Arab foes.

Each of the 83 passengers and crew was given a bunch of flowers and Syrian Transport Minister Yussef Al Ahmad invited the visitors to a banquet in their honour.

Syrian airport workers gathered in front of the Egyptian Boeing 737 to celebrate the resumption of air links, suspended in 1979 when Cairo signed a peace treaty with Israel.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad decided in a telephone conversation on Monday to restore flights.

Egyptian Deputy Transport Minister Major-General Sameer Rashad said on arrival: "We are here in Syria among our families and beloved brothers... we feel that we are in our second country."

He said Egyptair would schedule three weekly flights to Damascus.

Major-General Adnan Al Jabi, director general of Syrian Airlines, said each country would open an airline office in the other's capital within the next few days.

The first Syrian plane would leave for Cairo tomorrow with an official delegation, he said. Resumption of air links "would improve economic and commercial co-operation and activate tourism."

Al Jabi, said in statement "the resumption of flights between Syria and Egypt after 10 years would improve the economic and commercial co-operation and activate tourism."

The decision to restore regular flights suspended in 1979 when Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel was taken following a telephone conversation between Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday, he said.

Syria and Libya are the only two Arab countries which have not restored diplomatic ties with Cairo.

Oapec chief underscores increasing importance of gas

DOHA, Qatar, Dec 12 (AP): The head of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries today underscored the growing importance of natural gas in world energy supplies.

"This importance derives from the rising Arab reserves of gas after new discoveries were made in Arab countries and the anticipated expansion in its use as a source of energy and as feedstock for petrochemical and metallurgical industries," Oapec acting secretary-general Abdul Aziz Al Wattani said in an interview with the Qatari News Agency.

He noted however that exploitation of the gas is costly and requires a minimum

level of demand to make it feasible.

Wattani was speaking on the sidelines of the second seminar on use of natural gas in the Arab countries organised by Oapec and the Qatar General Petroleum Corp.

An Oapec working paper being discussed by the seminar mentions the possibility of building one or more grids through which gas can be transported to meet the needs of global consumption.

Qatar has one of the largest non-associated gas fields in the world, which it is in the process of developing. Gulf Co-operation Council members — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar — are

already working on a feasibility study for a GCC gas grid drawing from Qatar's field.

The other GCC countries mainly have associated gas, which is gas drawn at the oilwell heads. Iraq and Iran, the other Gulf littoral countries, also have considerable gas potential.

The GCC member countries, with the exception of Oman, are members of Oapec. The other Oapec members are Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia.

In his opening address to the seminar yesterday, Wattani placed proven natural gas reserves in Arab countries, associated and non-associated, at a total of 24 trillion

cubic metres (857 trillion cubic feet) or 22 per cent of world reserves.

He said that since 1980 Arab reserves have doubled because of the decline in demand for Arab oil and the resulting decline in the Arab production of oil and associated gas in the early 1980s.

He stressed that Qatar is prepared to become a gas-exporting country and said the first phase currently under way for development of the North Field will produce 750 million cubic feet when commissioned in 1991, along with an annual output of 450,000 tons of ethane and over 50,000 barrels per day of liquefied gases and condensates.

Dollar dips Bonn mark jumps

LONDON, Dec 12 (Reuters): Driven by detente, the West German mark jumped more than three pence to close at a year-high against the dollar in Europe today.

"The mark remains the flavour of the day and the month," a dealer at a London bank said as the currency continued a rally begun after East Germany opened its borders one month ago.

The dollar ended in London at 1.7345 marks, its lowest since December 1987 when it closed at 1.7315. It finished on Monday at 1.7364.

The dollar has fallen steadily since reaching a 1989 closing high of 2.0005 marks on September 15.

It was also sharply higher today against other major currencies although dealers said volume was low in the run-up to Christmas.

"The rally is fuelled purely by commercial demand," said one trader in Frankfurt. "The professionals do not want to get involved in the market this close to the end of the year."

Dealers were divided about the future direction of the dollar and the mark. Some said the mark continued to look well bid although others said the four-week rally might falter soon as investors took profits.

"Some people are getting worried about the dollar," said one trader. "There is talk that it might go into freefall."

But a second trader said the dollar should regain some lost ground as there were signs the United States would avoid recession in 1990, indicating that US interest rates were unlikely to ease.

The mark's rally has been fuelled by expectations that US interest rates could slide, while West German rates remain firm.

The latest burst of mark strength followed Monday's 1990 pay claim by West German engineering workers which, combined with a demand for shorter hours, amounts to a total of 12 per cent.

The inflationary pressures that could be released by such a claim would keep West German interest rates steady or even push them higher, dealers said.

He mark has gained 10 pence since East German borders were opened on November 9, raising the prospect that the already robust strong West German economy stood to strengthen further.

Against the Japanese yen, the dollar closed in London at 143.85 after 144.50 on Monday.

The pound sterling ended firmer at 1.6040 after 1.5885, following comments on Monday by British Chancellor of the Exchequer John Major that he would not hesitate to raise interest rates to bring down inflation.

The mark rose to 2-1/2 year highs against the yen and 8-1/2 year highs against the Swiss franc, dealers said.

"The mark is remarkably strong against the Swiss franc," one dealer said. "It is no longer just a case of the strong mark, but also the fact that the Swiss franc is really fundamentally weak. The Swiss economy is not exactly rosy."

On the London Stock Exchange, shares closed higher after a session dominated by the start of trading in the newly privatised water companies of England and Wales.

WORLD STOCK ROUNDUP

SYDNEY, Dec 12 (Reuters): Prices drifted downward in local trading despite a sharply higher gold sector.

The All-Ordinaries index dropped 3.1 to 1,612.7.

TOKYO: Prices fluctuated in a narrow range of a timeshare day, but one trader said the market remained strong. The Nikkei index gained 50.68 to 37,803.53.

HONG KONG: The market broke out of a prolonged spell of inertia, chiefly as a result of a high-level US mission to Beijing. The Hang Seng index rose 46.25 to 2,809.38, its biggest single-day gain since Nov 9.

BOMBAY: Share prices ended mixed in volatile trading for the new account after the exchange authorities halved deposit margins on sales to 15 per cent on 42 leading stocks.

FRANKFURT: West German shares ended mixed as the market's consolidation continued amid waning volume. The Dax index closed at 1,653.07, down 0.65.

ZURICH: Swiss shares closed lower in thin trading "nothing happened and volume was very thin," one dealer said. The Swiss performance index closed at 1,136.3.

Australian trade policy hailed

GENEVA, Dec 12 (AP): Australia's liberalisation of trade and loosening of financial controls during the 1980s has been a boon to it and its trading partners, according to an international report issued today.

The report on Australian trade is the first of its kind to be issued by the secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade under a December 1988 agreement.

The report said Australian trade policy reforms are expected to improve that nation's economic growth and development while boosting exports.

During the 1980s, Australia's merchandise imports increased rapidly, especially from the Far East. The value of imports from South Korea quadrupled between 1979 and 1987, those from China tripled and those from Japan doubled, the Geneva-based GATT secretariat said.

Import tariffs have traditionally been the main form of protection for Australia's own manufacturing industry, and domestic pricing arrangements have helped support agriculture, the secretariat said.

Under a new liberalisation programme, tariffs and supports will be reduced in virtually all sectors by 1995. However, dairy, clothing, textiles, footwear and passenger vehicles will remain highly protected, the secretariat report said.

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Poland, IMF hold talks to clinch deal

WARSAW, Dec 12, (Reuters): Poland and the International Monetary Fund ended a round of talks today on an agreement that would trigger billions of dollars of Western aid.

Final agreement on a tough economic adjustment plan for Poland is expected to be announced later this week.

A Polish spokesman said IMF managing director Michel Camdessus met Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz for more than three hours before leaving Poland after four days of intensive talks to clinch negotiations that began in September.

Camdessus said on Monday he and Balcerowicz had already agreed the key elements of letter of intent from the Polish government to the IMF detailing proposed economic reforms and austerity measures for 1990.

The Finance Ministry spokesman gave no details of today's talks but Camdessus said on Monday it would be the last round and he expected the letter of intent to be finalised this week.

Camdessus told reporters he enthusiastically endorsed the "courageous" programme proposed by the Solidarity-led government to curb 450 per cent inflation and switch Poland rapidly from communism to capitalism.

Manila can rebound, says IMF

MANILA, Philippines, Dec 12, (AP): The Philippines can rebound from the economic response to last week's failed coup attempt, a senior International Monetary Fund official said after meeting today with President Corason Aquino.

Prabhakar Narvakar, the IMF's Asian department director, also affirmed the organisation's support for Aquino.

Prices dropped today for the second successive trading day on the Manila Stock Exchange, as participants continued to sell following the nine-day coup attempt that ended Saturday. At least 113 people died and more than 500 were injured in the fighting between loyal and rebel troops.

Narvakar said he was "quite confident" the Philippines can recover from the negative effects of the most serious of at least six coup attempts against Aquino's government. "I have seen so many countries undergo so many crises and rebounding," he said.

Government officials assured him that they are doing their best to arrest the economy's double-digit inflation and maintain its 6.5 per cent growth target, Narvakar said.

On the stock exchange, the Manila composite stock index of 25 selected issues dropped 49.61 points to 1,162.21, down 4 per cent from Monday's close of 1,211.82.

Total losses in the index since Monday, when trading resumed after the market was closed for six days during the coup attempt, were 12.1 per cent, from an index level of 1,137.86 points on Nov 29.

Currency rates

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): Following are the international currency rates as quoted by local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait today.

	Buying	Selling
US dollar	0.2543	0.2563
Sterling	0.4973	0.4735
DM	0.1676	0.1680
S.Fr.	0.1853	0.1864
F.Fr.	0.0499	0.0493
It.lira	0.002271	0.002287
Jap.yen	0.002043	0.002053
Bah.din	0.7831	0.7810
UAE Dir.	0.08038	0.08076
S.Riyal	0.07073	0.07010
O.Riyal	0.08111	0.08152
O.Riyal	0.75654	0.77053

Interest Rates

KUWAIT, Dec 12, (Kuna): Following are the average KD interest rates of local interbank transactions as reported by participants to Central Bank of Kuwait today.

Period	Bid	Offered
1 month	8-5/16	8-9/16
3 months	8-5/16	8-9/16
6 months	8-3/16	8-7/16
1 year	8-1/8	8-3/8

EXCHANGERATES

Indian rupee	17.600
Sri Lankan rupee	7.480
Pakistani rupee	13.970
Bangladesh taka	9.100
US dollar	29.650
Pound sterling	47.250
UAE dirham	0.08069
Deutsche mark	1.6855
Japanese yen	0.02059

Brokerage firms bearish on economy, stocks for '90

NEW YORK, Dec 12, (AP): Pessimism is the message for 1990 from Wall Street, with major brokerages forecasting an economic downturn and some a outright recession.

In their annual year-ahead forecasts, the firms that both engineer multi-billion-dollar deals and advise individual investors aren't in total agreement, but none is optimistic. The consensus view of Wall Street's seers is that slow economic growth, a weak dollar overseas and slumping corporate profits will combine to retard the economy and the stock market at the start of the new decade.

Kidder, Peabody and Co. predicts very slow growth in the range of 1 per cent but not a "dictionary definition" of a recession. The firm's inflation

estimates vary from just over 3 per cent to over 4 per cent, on the low side of Wall Street expectations.

Stefan Abrams, Kidder's chief investment strategist, said a key issue will be wage and employment pressures, and that more job cuts such as the recent 10,000 announced by IBM and more than 30,000 at AT and T could provoke a full-scale recession.

Economists are in agreement about groups of stocks that will do well in 1990: growth companies in areas such as pharmaceuticals and beverages, and recent "fallen angels" such as Anheuser-Busch Cos. Inc. or Dun and Bradstreet Corp.

"After an eight-year run reflecting a seven-year economic expansion, my view is there ain't much out there that is

unexploited," Abrams said Monday. "We've had a long time to rotate everybody into one dance."

Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. is the leading 1990 Naysayer among the big firms. Its report on 1990, released today, is titled "What if bear market?" and features a drawing of a teddy bear on the cover. The firm predicts a recession.

Abby Joseph Cohen, Drexel's chief investment strategist, forecast that corporate profits will decline to earnings per share of \$22 and 50 cents for the Standard and Poor's 500 stock index, significantly lower than other firms' predictions in the \$25 range.

"We believe that profits have already peaked and that consensus expectations are too high," Cohen writes.

Drexel's recommendation: buy stocks in companies whose earnings and revenues are not likely to be harmed by an economic slowdown or recession, such as soft drinks, pharmaceuticals and emerging industries such as biotechnology.

Also contributing to a recession, Drexel says, is a declining money flow due to factors such as bearish foreign sentiment on the dollar, weakness in domestic demand for goods, lower corporate profits and soft real estate prices. Merrill Lynch and Co., the largest Wall Street firm, is slightly more sanguine. "We should expect a full-fledged recession, but it may be a close call," chief economist Donald H. Straszheim wrote last week.

Returns on stocks should be below average next year, Merrill predicted, with a change in market leadership to capital goods and energy stocks from consumer and financial issues. Its recommendation: companies offering growth potential.

PaineWebber Inc. Chief economist Edward M. Kerschner was the most chipper of his peers, saying in a "happy New Year" memo to staffers that "before spring, lower interest rates and the outlook for upturn in the economy could be fuel for the next leg of the bull market."

Kerschner predicted the stock market could end 1990 10 per cent to 15 per cent higher than at the start. The rapidly changing political situa-

tion in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a wild card cited by several economists. The Soviet Union needs Western technology to rebuild its economy, they said, and faster growth in Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia could benefit the US economy.

Some economists say bonds should benefit because lower US defence spending should reduce the federal deficit, and therefore reduce interest rates, while stocks should gain based on both lower interest rates and faster global growth.

"It's all very bullish for bonds and stocks — as long as perestroika continues," Kerschner wrote, referring to Soviet restructuring.

Qatar signs syndicated loan to finance project

Gas field likely to go on stream in 1991

DOHA, Qatar, Dec 12, (AP): Qatar General Petroleum Corp. signed a \$400 million syndicated loan from a group of nine banks to finance its massive North Field gas project, a newspaper reported today.

Doha's Gulf Times newspaper quoted Abdullah Khaled Al Attiya, the general manager of the Qatar National Bank, as saying that the three-year loan is priced at 22.5 basis points above the London inter-bank offered rate.

He also said that the loan is equally split at about \$44 million for each of the participating banks. The banks, besides Qatar National Bank, are the Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank, the Dhahran-based Arab

Petroleum Investment Corp. and the Gulf Investment Corp. of Kuwait.

Other banks included in the package are Britain's National Westminster Bank, Japan's Bank of Tokyo and Mitsubishi Bank, the American Chase Investment Bank and the Jeddah-based Riyad Bank.

The deal was to be signed in March but covering negotiations were delayed. Gulf Times said that QGPC, which is financing the first phase of the project through the sale of 40,000 barrels a day of oil specially earmarked for the project, has not been in a hurry to avail itself of the loan.

Work on the first phase of the North Field, one of the largest in the world, involves tapping of

800 billion cubic feet a day of gas from the 380 trillion-cubic-foot reservoir in shallow waters 50 miles (80 kms) off the landfall at Ras Lassa in the north of the country. Proven reserves are put at 150 trillion cubic feet.

Work began in May 1987 and is likely to be completed by the end of next year. The field is expected to go on stream in 1991 at a total development cost of \$1.25 billion.

The newspaper quoted officials as saying the loan is self-liquidating and officials expect 50,000 barrels a day of liquid and condensate to be produced during the first phase.

Addressing the new session of the advisory council today, the

Amir Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, devoted considerable attention to the use of the natural gas wealth of the North Field.

"Our faith in the prominent place expected for the Qatari gas in the world gas trade is strengthened by the marked international shift to the use of natural gas due to increasing awareness of the need to protect the environment."

He said natural gas is a clean fuel free of the pollution associated with traditional sources of energy and the risks inherent in nuclear energy.

On Monday, at a meeting with a group of Egyptian journalists the Amir predicted oil prices will gradually rise in the 1990s due to production cuts by some producing countries.

British economy is slowing down

LONDON, Dec 12, (Reuters): British retail sales fell sharply last month, signalling what Chancellor of the Exchequer John Major said today was a slowdown in the economy as the government battled inflation.

Official figures showed retail sales dropped 0.8 per cent in the runup to Christmas between October and November compared with analysts' forecasts of a 0.1 per cent increase.

This spells lower profits and difficult trading conditions for retail chains but is good news for Major, whose priority is to curb inflation now at an annual rate of 7.3 per cent.

"The economy is slowing down as it necessarily must do if we are to bring inflation down," he told a briefing for the foreign press.

British shares and the pound sterling were underpinned by the official figures.

"Retail sales have fallen two months in a row now, which suggests the government's high interest rate policy has slowed consumer spending perhaps even more than we thought," said Kevin Gardiner an economist at Warburgs.

Shares in 10 newly privatised water companies in England and Wales made a big splash when they started trading in London today as some of the 2.7 million small investors who bought stock reaped hefty instant profits.

The controversial sell-off of the companies was the latest in Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's sweeping privatisation programme and the third biggest after British Petroleum and British Gas. Water utilities in northern Ireland and Scotland were not included in the offer.

The £5.25 billion (\$8.4 billion) flotation was 5.7 times subscribed. Delighted government officials hailed the demand for the shares as a re-affirmation of popular capitalism.

It was at one time the most unpopular of Thatcher's privatisations because feelings ran high about putting the water authorities in private hands.

But an attractive offer price, a promise of lucrative dividends and generous incentives, coupled with easy payment, turned what some analysts had predicted would be a potential flop into a roaring success.

Northumbrian Water Group PLC was the star performer, surging to £1.70 (\$2.72) compared with the one pound (\$1.60) first instalment for which the government sold each share. It was buoyed by takeover speculation.

Other water companies made 40 pence (64 cents) or so on paper for their new owners, but many investors could not take profits immediately as share certificates will only be sent out on December 20.

France to lift capital controls

PARIS, Dec 12, (Reuters): France, a leading backer of European Monetary Union (EMU), said today that it will lift its last exchange controls from January 1, freeing the country of limits on capital movements for the first time since World War Two.

"The French government has decided to completely free the movement of capital from January 1, 1990, onward," Finance Minister Pierre Bergeyovoy said in a statement.

"This expresses our confidence in the good health of the French economy and in the stability of our currency."

Most major controls on capital movement by French corporations were lifted in March.

The two remaining controls are a ban on residents holding accounts in French banks in foreign currencies, except for European currency units, and a veto on private French citizens holding foreign-based bank accounts.

Complete freedom of capital movement is one of the conditions set by the European Economic Community as the first stage in its drive toward EMU.

At a weekend summit in Strasbourg, EEC leaders approved the convening of an intergovernmental conference to accelerate progress on monetary integration along the lines suggested in a report by EEC commission president Jacques Delors.

Exchange reserves now total \$1.4b

BUENOS AIRES, Dec 12, (UPI): The US dollar will be allowed to float on Argentina's exchange markets, thereby creating a legal free-market rate that will co-exist with the fixed exchange rate, economic officials said today.

Economy Minister Nestor Rapanelli's announcement that the austral, Argentina's monetary unit, will be allowed to "oscillate with supply and demand" came amid cautious praise from bankers and business leaders for tough new austerity measures.

The plan announced just after midnight devalued the austral by 53.8 per cent, raised export taxes and increased gasoline and fuel prices by as much as 61 per cent.

"In a short period of time, we will go to a system of absolutely free exchange," Rapanelli said in a radio and television speech explaining the austerity package.

The dual exchange rate system was attempted on Aug. 3, 1988, by President Raul Alfonsín's government in a programme called the "spring plan." Under the Alfonsín plan exchange rates were fixed for imports and exports, called the "commercial rate." A free rate was set for all other transactions.

On April 13 of this year, during a period of rapidly rising inflation, then-economy minister Juan Carlos Pugliese attempted a single free-market exchange rate, but the experiment ended in just six weeks and Argentina returned to a fixed official exchange rate on May 29.

Co-existing with the official exchange rate is a semi-legal black market, whose overheating in recent weeks prompted the government to launch its new austerity programme.

Rapanelli said the devaluation and gasoline price hike inevitably will lead to a temporary resumption of inflation that will go into a "downward trend."

He said Argentina will have a \$5 billion surplus in exports in 1989 and that foreign exchange reserves now total \$1.4 billion compared to "zero last July."

"We will definitely eradicate inflation," Rapanelli said. "We are cutting public spending every day."

Defenders of Rapanelli's proposed dual exchange rate said it enables the Central Bank to earn more australes by selling hard currency on the open market.

Critics called it complicated to operate and said it would lead to favouritism, allowing exporters and

importers to get cheap dollars from the Central Bank.

"The measures were necessary," Richard Handley, president of the Argentine branch of New York's Citibank, told a Buenos Aires radio station.

Banks were closed Monday to give the Central Bank time to distribute circulars on the new measures, which prohibit creditors of Argentina's \$7 billion internal debt from cashing in bonds for a period of two years.

The austral, Argentina's currency, was devalued 53.8 per cent, to sell at 1,000 australes instead of the old rate of 650 australes. Export taxes were raised 11 per cent while import duties were trimmed by 10 per cent.

Gasoline and fuel prices were raised from 59 per cent to 61 per cent and other hikes in other public utility rates, such as bus fares and electricity, were considered imminent.

Guillermo Alchouron, president of the Rural Society, which represents the country's large agricultural producers, said that although his organisation opposed details of the programme, "it is important that the population takes these measures well and that they work."

He said the Rural Society considers export taxes "perverse" and favoured ending the fixed exchange rate, something the government has promised to do shortly.

An economist of the opposition radical Civic Union Party, Francisco Mezzadri, said the plan would be "very good if they can carry it out," but he warned that the government of President Carlos Menem "had lost credibility" because it had previously promised to make no modifications of its economic programme until March.

Consumers were less sanguine. Mario Gomez, 39, an apartment building superintendent, said, "I suppose the new measures mean we will have to tighten our belts again, but I don't know what this is all about."

A newsboy commented, "you can tell people are worried. They're buying a lot of financial newspapers."

The government said the austerity package was necessary because of a run on the dollar in recent weeks on foreign exchange markets. The rising price of the black market dollar presented the danger of provoking a new round of uncontrollable inflation.

Growing foreign investment no reason for concern in US: study

WASHINGTON, Dec 12, (AP): Foreign ownership of US factories, banks and other businesses has escalated in recent years, but most fears about adverse economic consequences from foreign control are unwarranted, according to a study by a Washington research group.

The Institute for International Economics said that contrary to some arguments, the growth of foreign ownership has not translated into a loss of jobs for Americans and that foreign companies paid their US workers the same as domestic companies.

In the report issued Monday, the institute argued against changing any US laws to block foreign investment, saying that even in the area of national security, the growth of foreign ownership was not of concern.

"Even with the recent growth in foreign ownership, foreign companies play a smaller role in the US economy than in the Canadian and major European economies," wrote the authors of the report. Paul Krugman, an economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Edwin M. Graham, a business professor at Duke University.

The study said that foreign companies accounted for 7 per cent of total US

employment in manufacturing in 1986 compared to 21 per cent in France, 14 per cent in Britain and 13 per cent in West Germany. By contrast, however, foreign-owned companies employed only 1 per cent of manufacturing workers in Japan, a country with a tradition of making it difficult for foreign companies to make investments.

"If one country invests heavily in another country, which country has given the most hostages?" Krugman asked at a news conference where the report was released. "Japan is going to find that it has a very great stake in what the US government decides when it discovers that it has a rather large part of its national wealth invested inside the US borders."

The new report, "Foreign direct investment in the United States," analyzed the rapid growth in foreign direct investment. To count as foreign ownership, the foreign companies must own at least 10 per cent of a US business.

The heavy purchases by foreigners, in particular the Japanese, has triggered a concern in Congress and elsewhere that the United States is selling off its economic destiny to foreigners.

The Commerce Department reported

that foreign direct investment in US real estate and businesses totalled \$328.9 billion in 1988, the first year that foreign direct ownership in the United States surpassed US ownership overseas, which totalled \$26.9 billion.

While Britain continued as the country with the largest stake in the United States, holding 31 per cent of total foreign-held assets, Japan climbed into the No. 2 spot with 16.2 per cent of the total, ahead of the Netherlands, which held 14.9 per cent.

While purchases of prime real estate and movie studios by the Japanese grabbed the headlines, the most dramatic inroads by the Japanese have come in banking, according to the institute's study.

It reported that the Japanese in 1988 controlled 52.2 per cent of the US banking assets held by foreign banks, far ahead of the second-biggest foreign holder, Canada, which controls 7.1 per cent.

In all, foreign banks controlled 19.2 per cent of total American banking assets in 1988, up from 8 per cent a decade earlier. The Japanese alone controlled 10.1 per cent of US banking assets in 1988.

The institute said that growing foreign leadership in high-technology industries posed new problems in meeting US

military needs. As a partial solution, the study proposed making it mandatory for foreign companies making sales to the Pentagon to establish manufacturing plants in the United States.

The growth in foreign direct investment in the United States has come during a decade when huge merchandise trade deficits transformed America from the world's largest creditor country to the largest debtor nation with foreign holdings in direct investments as well as in investments in stocks and bonds exceeded similar holdings by Americans overseas.

C. Fred Bergsten, director of the institute, said that 40 per cent of the \$10 billion the United States needs each month to finance its trade deficits comes to the United States in the form of direct investments.

Bergsten called this a preferable way to raise the funds than through purchase of US stocks and bonds, where foreign investors can decide much more quickly to pull their money out of the country.

"I have deplored as loudly as anyone the fact that we are having to attract \$10 billion a month in foreign investment, but the money is much more likely to stay put if it comes in as a direct investment," Bergsten said.

China's bid to join world trade body

GATT panel reviews

GENEVA, Dec 12, (Reuters): GATT member states today began discussions on a bid by China to join the world trade forum after a six-month delay which followed Beijing's crushing of the country's pro-democracy movement last June.

A GATT working party which has been looking into China's application since its submission three years ago opened the three-day private meeting at the Geneva headquarters of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, a GATT official said.

The trade body had cancelled sessions scheduled for last July and September because of what a GATT spokesman described at the time as "difficulties in having meaningful discussions in present circumstances."

The working party, composed of delegates from some 45 of GATT's 96 countries, was expected to hear a report by Chinese officials on the present state of China's economic reforms and Beijing's future plans.

The group would probably discuss the report and question the Chinese delegation, particularly about reported recent scrapping of some reforms and a trend back towards central control, trade soups said.

It would also have to consider the compatibility of Chinese policies with GATT's free trade principles, and decide whether to go ahead to examine terms and conditions for a possible protocol of accession for Beijing, the sources said.

A GATT spokesman said no details of the meeting were likely to be released before Wednesday.

China's Ambassador in Geneva, Fan Guoxiang, told a GATT meeting last week that Beijing would continue its policy of economic reform and an open door to the outside world, although it had launched this year a three-year programme to combat an overheated economy and high inflation.

China was a founder member of GATT, which sets rules for some four-fifths of world commerce, but quit in 1950 after a communist government took power.

Beijing applied in 1986 to "resume its seat," and at present has observer status in the organisation.

Bombay Stock Exchange prices (Rs) Dec 12.				Ind Rayon		90	92.50	94
				Indrol	197.50	197.50	207.50	210
				JK Syn	65	68	70	71
				Kir Curn	152.50	152.50	152.50	152.50
				KSB Pumps	66	67	70	70
ACC	Pr. Close	Open	Close	L & T	202.50	200	210	210
Alcan Chem	343.50	346	357	Lipton	81	86	88	88
Alv Nis				Max Bussel <th>170</th> <th>170</th> <th>175</th> <th>175</th>	170	170	175	175
Asi Fab				Mad Costs <th>106</th> <th>104</th> <th>106</th> <th>106</th>	106	104	106	106
Ashtok Ley	97	96	96	Mahtindra <th>89</th> <th>90</th> <th>93</th> <th>93</th>	89	90	93	93
Asia Paint	215	215	208.75	Max Share <th>16.50</th> <th>17</th> <th>18.15</th> <th>18.15</th>	16.50	17	18.15	18.15
Atlas Cop	46	43	48	Mico <th>780</th> <th>780</th> <th>805</th> <th>805</th>	780	780	805	805
Auto Corp	62.50	62.50	67.50	Mil Food <th>760</th> <th>265</th>	760	265	265	265
Nat Indent	408.00		421.89	Modi <th>75</th> <th>74</th> <th>76</th> <th>76</th>	75	74	76	76
Bajaj Auto	375	370	370	MRF Ltd <th>310</th> <th>320</th> <th>315</th> <th>315</th>	310	320	315	315
Bar Rayon	690		705	Muk Iron <th>142</th> <th>141</th> <th>141.50</th> <th>141.50</th>	142	141	141.50	141.50
Blow Plast				Nocil <th>1560</th> <th>1640</th> <th>1630</th> <th>1630</th>	1560	1640	1630	1630
Bomb Dye	195	198	197	Nippon <th>53.50</th> <th>55</th> <th>55</th> <th>55</th>	53.50	55	55	55
BK Bond	112	113	112.50	Orkay <th>20</th> <th>21.25</th> <th>20.50</th> <th>20.50</th>	20	21.25	20.50	20.50
Burr Well	87.50	82.50	85	Oswal Agro <th>54</th> <th>56</th> <th>56</th> <th>56</th>	54	56	56	56
Cambridge				Patra <th>26</th> <th>25</th> <th>26</th> <th>26</th>	26	25	26	26
Can Endo	3500	3500	3375	Pfizer <th>84</th> <th>87.50</th>	84	87.50	92.50	92.50
Cent Spig	3000	2970	2880	Prest Auto <th>202.50</th> <th>202.50</th> <th>207.50</th> <th>207.50</th>	202.50	202.50	207.50	207.50
Con Org	207.50	195	198.75	Rashay <th>67</th> <th>70</th> <th>70</th> <th>70</th>	67	70	70	70
Cromat Gr		800	800	Ray Wool	102.50	77	78.25	78.25
DCM	14.50	14	15	Rackitt	197.50	200	205	205
Deep Fert	31.50	34	38	Refinance	78	85.50	91	91
Enl Hotels	72.50	71.25	73.75	Shree Gon <th>92</th> <th>94</th> <th>84</th> <th>84</th>	92	94	84	84
ET Housie	79.25	82	83	Shree Hall <th>66</th> <th>65</th> <th>67.50</th> <th>67.50</th>	66	65	67.50	67.50
BSE Index	756.08		792.99	Shree Con <th>66</th> <th>65</th> <th>67.50</th> <th>67.50</th>	66	65	67.50	67.50
Eskayef	120	120	132.50	Sht Fib <th>88</th> <th>93</th> <th>96</th> <th>96</th>	88	93	96	96
Esar Spig	28.50	29.50	30.50	Sktm <th>1460</th> <th>1440</th> <th>1440</th> <th>1440</th>	1460	1440	1440	1440
Food Corp	112.50	120	122.50	SKF <th>99.50</th> <th>61.50</th> <th>62</th> <th>62</th>	99.50	61.50	62	62
Forbes	30	48	51.25	Spic <th>59</th> <th>59</th> <th>59</th> <th>59</th>	59	59	59	59
Gar Poly	69	62	59	St Mills <th>500</th> <th>500</th> <th>570</th> <th>570</th>	500	500	570	570
Gandhi	99.50	103	101.50	St Pauli <th>90</th> <th>90</th> <th>90</th> <th>90</th>	90	90	90	90
GICCL	124	127.50	130.30	Tata Chem <th>122</th> <th>122</th> <th>125</th> <th>125</th>	122	122	125	125
Grasim	124	127.50	130.30	Tata Pow <th>385</th> <th>390</th> <th>410</th> <th>410</th>	385	390	410	410
GE Shaps	51	52	51.75	Teico <th>1087.5</th> <th>1145</th> <th>1180</th> <th>1180</th>	1087.5	1145	1180	1180
GSFC	195	197.50	195	Thappo Agro <th>120</th> <th>120</th> <th>124</th> <th>124</th>	120	120	124	124
Guj Alki	76	75 <td>78<td>Van Org<th>145</th><th>143.75</th><th>148.75</th><th>148.75</th></td></td>	78 <td>Van Org<th>145</th><th>143.75</th><th>148.75</th><th>148.75</th></td>	Van Org <th>145</th> <th>143.75</th> <th>148.75</th> <th>148.75</th>	145	143.75	148.75	148.75
Guj Heavy	10.50	10	11 <td>Varela<th>21.25</th><th>21.25</th><th>23</th><th>23</th></td>	Varela <th>21.25</th> <th>21.25</th> <th>23</th> <th>23</th>	21.25	21.25	23	23
Hind Hoards	19	18	19 <td>Winox<th>950</th><th>675</th><th>700</th><th>700</th></td>	Winox <th>950</th> <th>675</th> <th>700</th> <th>700</th>	950	675	700	700
Hind Ciba	130	136	1340 <td>Zenith<th>23</th><th>23</th><th>25</th><th>25</th></td>	Zenith <th>23</th> <th>23</th> <th>25</th> <th>25</th>	23	23	25	25
Hind Ciba	130	136	1340 <td>Zuari Agro<th>64</th><th>62</th><th>65</th><th>65</th></td>	Zuari Agro <th>64</th> <th>62</th> <th>65</th> <th>65</th>	64	62	65	65
Hind Coca	145	155 <td>148.75</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td>	148.75					
Hind Motor	23.50	24.50	24.75					
Hindulco	283.75	270	270					
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Ingersoll	237.50	235	240					
ITC	67	69	67					
Ind Org	.49	51	51					

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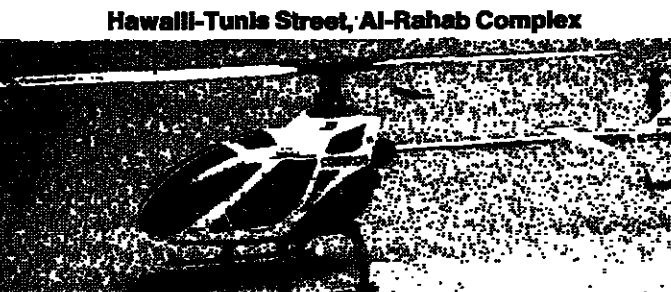
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SPORTS

ATHLETICS

Australians name team for Games

MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 12, (AP): Seoul Olympics Games 400 metres hurdles gold medallist Debbie Flintoff-King heads an 85-member Australian track and field team named today to compete in next month's Auckland Commonwealth Games.

The team of 49 men and 36 women was announced by Athletics Australia President David Prince, but a row immediately broke out because of the size of the squad for the meet, scheduled Jan 23 to Feb 3.

Australian Commonwealth Games Association secretary Arthur Tunstall said the team comprised 15 athletes more than had been approved by the ACGA.

Tunstall said ACGA executive members would hold a telephone link-up with Athletics Australia officials on Thursday before deciding whether to approve the increase.

Prince said Athletics Australia would not consider further cuts to the team because it considered the squad selected could win up to 40 medals.

Total

"This is the bottom line," he said.

Australia won 26 track and field medals at the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Prince said a total of 126 athletes had met the games qualifying standards. Among the omissions were 1982 Commonwealth Games 800 metres gold medallist Peter Bourke and veteran middle distance runner Mike Hillard.

Four athletes, long jumper Jane Flemming, Seoul Olympic 400 metres finalist Marree Holland, defending long jump champion Gary Honey and Edinburgh shot put silver medallist Joe Quigley were selected subject to fitness.

The team will have a pre-games tryout on Jan 14 against England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Canada, Nigeria, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand and the Bahamas in the Festival of Sydney International.

Mulsanne Straight highly dangerous: Fisa

Le Mans forced to conform

PARIS, Dec 12, (Reuters): Few tears were shed by the world's top sportscar drivers after motor racing's governing body sounded the death knell for the famous and highly dangerous Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans.

The 6.2-km straight has for years been the focus of an almost ghoulish fascination among motor racing fans who flock in their thousands to attend the 24-hour sports car race in western France.

But, after the announcement of new safety regulations by the International Motor Sports Federation (Fisa) on Friday, the long and spectacular straight will have to be broken by chicanes and the straight sections reduced to a maximum of two km each.

World sportscar drivers champion Jean-Louis Schlesser of France, well aware of the special significance of Le Mans in world motor sport, was adamant that the move to reduce the straight was absolutely correct and in the best interests of all concerned.

"In this," he said, "we are talking about life. It is about life and life has rules. It is the same for racing. You must have rules for safety and you must respect them."

"The regulations will make the circuit safer and the spectacle of Le Mans with its 24-hour fiesta with 250,000 people will go on. The only difference is that it will be much safer for everyone."

Next year's planned race at Le Mans may not take place if the circuit's administrators, the Automobile Club de L'Ouest (ACO), fail to satisfy all the new safety conditions.

ACO's circuit licence expires at the end of this year and will not be renewed unless Fisa is satisfied that all their instructions on safety improvements at Le Mans have been carried out.

Schlesser is in no doubt about the situation. "Le Mans has to do something because it is the best-known race in the world and they have to show the way," he said.

"In the past the cars have reached 300 or may be 330 kph after four of five km. Now, after one and a half km, we are at 380 kph and we are planning to go faster. If we do nothing about this in the



An action shot from this year's Le Mans race held in June. (Reuters filephoto)

future, the car will fly.

"Spectators are forbidden from the straight. It is too dangerous. They are not allowed to go there. So why do the drivers have to go there?"

"Do you have football matches without spectators? I think it is the most dangerous straight in the world and something had to be done."

Schlesser told Reuters how it felt to be driving a racing sportscar down the Mulsanne Straight and why it was dangerous.

"It is strange. The problem is that it feels nothing very special — nothing different — and that is why it is so dangerous," he said.

"This is because we, the drivers, get used to it. We are proficient and for us it is not complicated to drive on it — but that is the great danger with the speed and that is why I am against it."

"The problem is that if you have any problems at all at that

speed, you can do nothing. Nothing at all. And do not forget that small planes take off now at about 200 kph and we are racing at double that speed with only 900 kilos."

Schlesser admitted that, as a Frenchman, he would feel some sadness if the Le Mans 24-hour race was not run again, but stressed that the safety aspect could be ignored no longer.

"They have chicanes at Hockenheim and they shortened SPA so they must do something at Le Mans. It is one of the most dangerous circuits in the world and was certainly, with the straight, the most dangerous on this year."

The Le Mans 24-hour race was first run in 1923 and has enjoyed a chequered history of famed achievements and tragic accidents.

The Italian Alfa Romeos and British Jaguars established their reputations with great runs of successive wins in the 1930s and

1950s respectively.

The greatest crisis in the history of the race was in 1955 when, in the worst accident in motor racing history, 83 people were killed when a Mercedes driven by Pierre Levegh crashed in front of the pits and scythed into the crowd.

It was a tragedy that was to scar the event for years and motor racing was banned in Switzerland as a result, but the legendary battles between the Jaguars, Mercedes, Ferraris, Aston Martins and Maseratis kept the fame on Le Mans alive for many more years until the modern emergence of Porsche in the 1980s.

Despite the alterations, Schlesser is convinced the race will survive and extend its rich history.

"There is no reason why Le Mans cannot make the changes and come back — it's a special race. Don't forget how down Le Mans has been before. Now it is

up again and I am sure it will stay there."

Le Mans organisers, however, pledged yesterday to hold the sports car classic next year.

ACO, backed by parliamentarians from western France, said it planned to propose legislation which would end Fisa's power over the annual event.

Mayor of Le Mans Robert Jarry said: "The Le Mans 24-hour race will be held if the ACO says so. The organisers have a perfect right to organise the race."

Eight parliamentarians said a bill would be placed before the French national assembly this week.

Famous car races, which often form part of a national heritage, are under threat from arbitrary decisions," they said in a statement in a direct reference to Fisa.

Under the legislation, the French state would approve or reject applications to stage races.

Kuwait Darts League

Soweto Slingers overcome MEE

MIDDLE EASTENDERS' fine win over Bulls Hitters last week more got the Avengers off to a flying start with two scoring trebles, again MEE ladies fighting back to draw level on 97 points each. With both teams needing 3 bulls to win, the visitors appeared to have saved the match as they hit 225s. But they reckoned without Jankowski who tied the game for good with a 25 and centre bull to give the Avengers victory.

Ian Moorhouse almost caused an upset against Ian Thomas in the opener, narrowly losing the deciding leg despite Thomas' 7 high scores. Second up, was inform Richard Ellis faced by an undefeated John Morris. Morris won the first leg convincingly, before the consistent Ellis once more started to find the mark. His 5th and 6th 140s of the season won him the 2nd leg and gave him a good start in the decider, but the Scotsman still snatched the game from Ellis' grasp.

With the game poised at 1-1, John Donovan took to the oche, still in search of his first win, against Peter Bedlow. The quiet spoken Englishman found form hard to come by until he hit a 140, but by then the gritty Welshman had clinched the first leg with double 8, and not to be denied, repeated the feat to win 2-0.

In the final singles match Terry Slattery took an easy first leg lead from Geoff Clark, who used 18 darts just to break the 400 mark, but Clark showed his true mettle by responding with 3 high scores, and just managed to pip Slattery in both the next legs. The match to this point had produced 21 high scores, a KDL record, and when Slattery started both Mickey Mouse games with two trebles, MEE knew their number was up, and they gracefully had to accept defeat as their opponents seemed to be able to do no wrong.

An equally impressive display was then seen in the ladies match. Both 301s went to Avengers, with double at the first attempt, and at 2-0 they appeared to be taking total control, especially when they built a useful lead in the first Mickey Mouse game, but consistent scoring by MEE Ladies set up Betty Morris who saved the leg with 3 bulls in 2

daris to reduce the arrears to 3-1.

Suzanne Jankowski once more got the Avengers off to a flying start with two scoring trebles, again MEE ladies fighting back to draw level on 97 points each. With both teams needing 3 bulls to win, the visitors appeared to have saved the match as they hit 225s. But they reckoned without Jankowski who tied the game for good with a 25 and centre bull to give the Avengers victory.

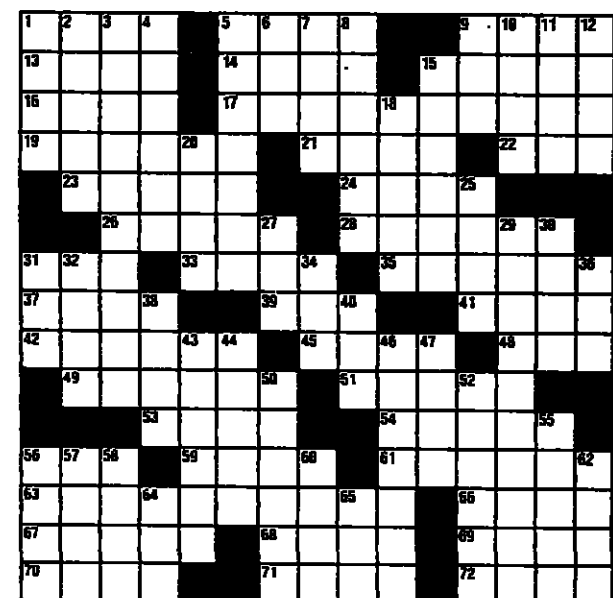
Has Beams are the new League leaders on game difference, thanks to a 6-0 win at No Hopps, who caught several waves, but not many doubles, as they spent more time on a more colourful board sport. The ladies draw life Northern Lights off the bottom for the first time, and was Human Beams 4th in 5 matches. Dorothy Carr earning her trophy with 3 bulls. Bulls Hitters returned to winning ways, but not without some alarms against Nobblers, Steve Edwards getting 140, but Nibblers did earn a splendid point against the ladies leaders, despite Margaret Watson getting a 125 and two MM trebles.

Mugs Away stayed firmly in contention with two wins at Grabbers as it turned into Hasezman Day — Chris with 140 and Mary with 2 scoring MM trebles. Blackouts shocked Equalisers taking 3 out of the 4 points in a match the home side must have fancied would have maintained their revival, whilst in the final fixture Absolutely again took a point from a leading team, Wearapeepel. A: 140 from Mike Durkin was not enough to keep his unbeaten record as Nick Harvey ran up 5 high scores in a 22-1 win. Benford Comments made it 7 out of 7 with a 4-0 rout that moves them up to 3rd spot. Eileen Walters being a highly delighted recipient of a ladies trophy.

The full results summary for this week's Mouchel Wednesday Darts League fixtures is as follows, with Ladies' scores in brackets:

S. Singers	(2) 5 MEE	(1) 1
Equalisers	(2) 2 Blackouts	(2) 4
Bulls Hitters	(2) 4 Nobblers	(2) 2
No Hopps	(2) 0 Has Beams	(2) 6
Jahny Gies	(0) 2 Mugs Away	(4) 4
Absolutely	(0) 3 Wearapeepel	(4) 3

TODAY'S CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Midlothian
 - 5 Travel agents' org.
 - 9 Created
 - 13 "I want for Christmas..."
 - 14 Box lightly
 - 16 Pirate Captain
 - 17 Garb for a kid brother
 - 19 Live oak
 - 21 Am
 - 22 Humourist Bill
 - 23 Sparkle
 - 24 "The Babe"
 - 26 Bone: Prefix
 - 28 Most foxy
 - 31 Stovepipe, for one
 - 33 Probability
 - 35 Very funny story
 - 37 Yearn
 - 39 Kind of phone or drum
 - 41 Israeli port
 - 42 Daubs
 - 45 1989, e.g.
 - 48 Baseball name of fame
 - 49 Land holding
 - 51 Display concern
 - 53 — poker
 - 54 Part of Miss Muffet's meal
 - 56 A Gershwin
 - 59 Wading bird
 - 61 Fieside area
 - 63 Passe
 - 66 Diminish in a way
 - 67 British TV
 - 68 Nonpareil
 - 69 Western Indians
 - 70 Dried up
 - 71 Cincinnati nine
 - 72 Church locations
 - DOWN
 - 1 Tokyo potato

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

SHADE SLAW AMPS
TALUS HARE POOH
ILLSTARRED POSE
ROOT ZIGS CENSE
BROKE CHASER
ACHIEVE TOAST
FRIEND SIMPERED
ANA FIBULAE UPI
REVEALER RACER
EXCEL CROCKET
FENCES CRANE
EASED BIAS TRUE
STEP EARTHBOUND
TENT ONCE UNDOED
ARTIS SEAR SEETO

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ A10 ♥ AKJ1052 ♦ 6 ♣ Q974

Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?

A.—This hand meets both criteria for a jump shift: a self-sustaining suit of its own, and a fit for partner's suit. So even though the high-card count is only 14, we would jump to two hearts.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ Q753 ♥ Q865 ♦ QJ62 ♣ 7

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1 ♠ Pass 1 ♦ Pass

2 NT Pass ?

What action do you take?

A.—Although textbooks proclaim that you need 25-26 points to make game at no trump, most forget to mention one added provision: both hands have to have a fair share of high cards. When the points are distributed 19-20 and 7, high cards alone are not enough, especially when there is no fit. Pass.

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ AK73 ♥ J97 ♦ J873 ♣ 92

Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

A.—The trouble with responding one spade is you will be in an awkward position should partner rebid one no trump or two clubs—two hearts is an underbid and three hearts a distinct stretch. You can

avoid that problem by raising to two hearts immediately.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 ♥ K4 ♦ 96542 ♣ J9765

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?

A.—It is quite likely that you have a better spot, but how do you propose getting there? Even if you play one no trump as forcing, that action is fraught with danger. Since you do not have the values for an immediate response, pass.

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ J2 ♥ Q764 ♦ K932 ♠ A107

Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

A.—Don't bypass a four-card major in favor of raising partner's minor, especially these days when partner might be bidding a three-card suit. Respond one heart.

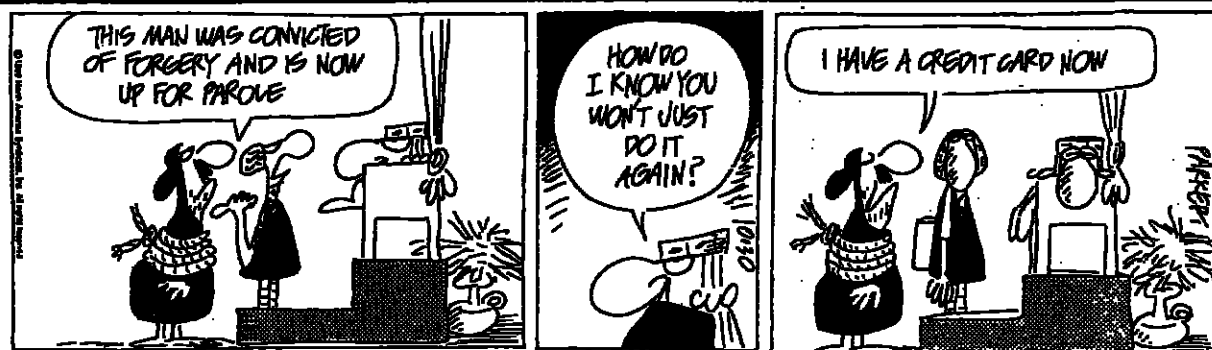
Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 87632 ♥ AKJ54 ♦ 8 ♣ 63

Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

A.—With two four-card suits, you respond as cheaply as possible to partner's minor-suit opening bid. With two five-card suits, however, bid the higher-ranking first, regardless of suit quality. Therefore, bid one spade.

THE WIZARD OF ID



B.C.



YOUR STARS



Aries (March 20 - April 18)

A matter you have been neglecting will now demand your attention. You should not be too long away from your partner. Use a little more commonsense. Be fair.



Taurus (April 19 - May 19)

You should have a little more faith in yourself and those close to you. You will be able to do something that interests you greatly. Enjoy life to the full. Be considerate.



Gemini (May 20 - June 20)

The situation whilst not entirely in your favour is none too bad. Your emotional life will tend to be a little more stable. You should avoid eating or drinking more than you know is good for you.



Cancer (June 21 - July 21)

The Moon's influence will help you to see things more clearly. You should watch out for certain unusual factors. Do not delay what you know should be done now. Be firm.



Leo (July 22 - Aug 21)

An offer or proposal should be examined most carefully. You will have to beware of chasing rainbows. Make sure you know and understand what is on your partner's mind. Be responsive.



Virgo (Aug 22 - Sept 21)

You should let yourself be more guided by commonsense. You must not lose sight of your objectives. Do not believe all you hear. Be selective.



Libra (Sept 22 - Oct 22)

The influence of Saturn and Uranus will help you to get a move on. You are somewhat lacking in determination. However your partner will help to spur you on. Be objective.



Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

You must not give up too soon. Nor however should you persist with a lost cause. Try to put your ideas into better order. Be a little more frugal.



Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

You should make sure you do not become too set in your ways. You must not abandon a friend who has got a few problems. A promise you have made will prove hard to keep. Be confident.



Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

There are some problems you must face right away or they will get worse. You should not be afraid to say what you think, but try to do so without giving offence. Make yourself more approachable. Be lenient.



Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Your greater inventiveness will help you to deal with your problems. You should make sure your various activities are coordinated. Have a bit of harmless fun. Be cordial.



Pisces (Feb 19 - March 19)

You will have something to really pleased about. A problem work should not be shirked. Take the best possible care of your health. Be generous.

Nam captures Peter Wilson Trophy

H.S. NAM, the much improved golfer from South Korea, eked out a tight victory margin of one point to win the Peter Wilson Trophy.

Fifty-one golfers turned out last Friday in fine weather at the Hunting and Equestrian Golf Club to contest for the trophy donated in memory of the late Dr Peter Wilson, who was a founding member of

this club.

The competition was played under the bogey rules where a plus is awarded for birdie or better, zero for par and minus for bogey or worse.

H.S. Nam (17) playing steady golf under almost ideal conditions carded a plus two to edge J.R. Chang and K.K. Lee (22) both

with plus one. J.R. Chang finally taking the runner-up spot on a count-back and K.K. Lee taking third place.

In side competition, it was a day to remember for H.S. Nam when his sand wedge tee shot landed 18 inches from the flag to win nearest to the pin contest on the par-3 thirteenth, while long-hitting C.K.

Lim won the longest drive contest on the par-4 seventeenth when his tee shot driven into a stiff wind landed 270 yards down the fairway.

Only Valentina Hedenstrom stopped a Korean clean sweep of this contest when she won the longest drive competition for women.

San Francisco gain home-field advantage

49ers beat Rams for title

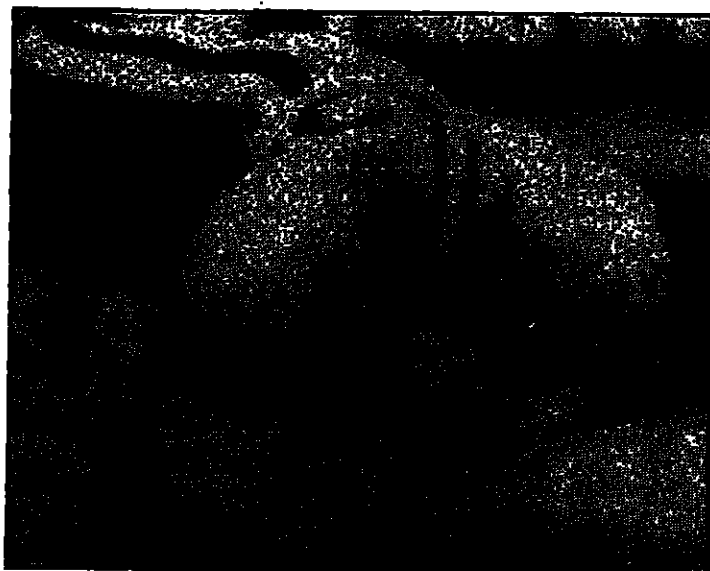
ANAHEIM, California, Dec 12, (AP) Joe Montana and John Taylor combined for touchdown passes of 92 and 95 yards as the San Francisco 49ers twice came back from 17-point deficits to beat the Los Angeles Rams 30-27, last night and clinch the division championship.

The 49ers, who trailed 17-0 after 13 minutes and 27-10 1:26 into the fourth quarter, got the winning score on a 1-yard run by Roger Craig with 3:12 left. It gave the 49ers a 12-2 record and clinched not only the NFC West title but the home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

Despite the heroics by Montana, who completed 30 of 42 for 458 yards, and Taylor, who caught 11 for 286 yards, both team records, the game turned on two Los Angeles turnovers in the fourth quarter.

The first came with the Rams leading 27-17 with a first down at the San Francisco 5.

Jim Everett fumbled the snap and Matt Millen recovered at the 4. On the first play, Montana



Roger Craig: got the winning score

found Taylor short over the middle and he sped along the right sideline for the score. They had combined on a 92-yarder in the second quarter two plays after

the Rams, then ahead 17-3, failed on a fake field goal attempt.

Standings

Standings of National Football League teams after games played yesterday (tabulate under won, lost, tied, points for).

American Conference											
Eastern Division						National Conference					
W	L	T	PF	PA		W	L	T	PF	PA	
Buffalo	8	6	0	362	296	Philadelphia	10	4	0	291	230
Miami	8	6	0	294	310	N.Y. Giants	10	4	0	299	235
Indianapolis	7	7	0	250	247	Washington	8	6	0	326	278
New England	5	9	0	267	339	Phoenix	5	9	0	244	309
N.Y. Jets	4	10	0	239	336	Dallas	1	13	0	194	358
Central Division						Western Division					
Houston	9	5	0	338	327	Minnesota	9	5	0	305	231
Cleveland	7	6	1	287	217	Green Bay	8	6	0	302	318
Cincinnati	7	7	0	322	249	Chicago	6	8	0	330	311
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	206	294	Tampa Bay	5	9	0	291	355
Western Division						Detroit	5	9	0	248	333
Denver	10	4	0	309	207	San Francisco	12	2	0	395	243
L.A. Raiders	8	6	0	281	240	L.A. Rams	9	5	0	364	310
Kansas City	7	6	1	278	242	New Orleans	7	7	0	315	275
Seattle	6	8	0	218	281	Atlanta	3	11	0	225	375
San Diego	4	10	0	227	261						



The victorious Evergreen squad.

Evergreen reach semifinals

QMCC overwhelm Lions

EVERGREEN cricketers defeated Mughal Cricket Club (MCC) by 25 runs at the EPI Ground earlier this week to reach the semifinals of the Bhutto Memorial Trophy cricket tournament.

Put in to bat by MCC's skipper Evergreen reached 163 for nine in 27 overs, the main contributors were Bader (30), Anjum Raza (29), Mehboob (28) and Amjad Malik (20).

For MCC, Naeem Butt and Maqbool bowled well taking three wickets each.

Shahid Maqbool, deputising injured skipper Asad Baig, realising the modest total he had to defend, marshalled his fielders well and made timely bowling changes thus restricting his opponents to 138 runs only in 27 overs during which eight wickets fell.

Tariq, with an unbeaten 74, was the only hero for MCC but his efforts could not get his team a



Sadaqat: live for 15

berth in the semifinal. For Evergreen, Bader and Jamil Muhammad had two wickets each while one went to Jamil Khan. The combination of Sadaqat and Waqar Zaidi accounted for two run-out victims while Mehboob and Jamil Khan were also out-standing in the field.

Earlier between the innings, the

teams were introduced to the sponsors of the tournament, Peoples Club president Dr Riaz Mirza and secretary Rafique Mirza. Also present during the ceremony were Yunus Chaudhry and Evergreen's senior vice-president Salim Pervez.

In a match of the Honda Cricket Trophy played at Salmiya ground on Friday, Quaid-e-Millat Cricket Club (QMCC) crushed Lions by eight wickets.

While batting first, Lions managed just 72 runs with Asfar (22) being the top scorer. Sadaqat was the wrecker-in-chief for QMCC and took five for only 15 runs. Amjad Malik supported him well with two for 18.

QMCC surpassed their opponents total after losing only both the openers Javaid and Chacha Hameed, who was run-out for a well-made 23. Amjad (20) and Jamil Muhammad saw their team home comfortably. The only wicket-taker for Lions was Ali.

Teachers, Eagles, Bazookas triumph

IN an exciting day of KISL play, the UAS Teachers upset Kay and Associates, 7-6, and the All-Japan Bazookas won their first game of the season, 16-5, over the FHWA Falcons. In the final game, the league-leading Eagles shipped past arch-rival Kuwait University, 4-3, to be sure of at least a tie for first place in the fall 1989 season.

UAS, merited by Kay earlier in the season, opened a 7-2 lead before hanging on as Kay scored four runs in the fifth. UAS ran its record to 5-4 while Kay dropped to 4-4. Kay jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the first as Robbie Robinson and coach Lee Ehret reached safely on errors, Kevin Stevenson singled and Tom Donnelly hit a sacrifice fly. UAS answered with one in the first as Lorne Bradt opened with a walk and Al Perry had a one-out RBI single.

UAS batted around to score five in the third. With one out, Ken Parker singled, Brocktrippled and Tim Hendershot singled. With two out, Jerry Soek singled, Dave Rojeck singled a run home, John Hoelam was safe on an error, Richard Downs walked to force in another and Dave Lamb singled home two key runs.

Kay's four in the fifth were unearned. Chuck Wills reached on an error, an out later Stanley D'Souza singled, and with two out and two on, Robinson reached on an error, Ehret homered, and Stevenson and Donnelly singled.

The Bazookas finally broke into the win column, scoring in all but two innings and leading all the way. The score was 8-2 before All-Japan broke the game wide open in the sixth with six runs. The Falcons scored in four of seven innings and had 11 hits to the Bazookas' 16.

All-Japan scored three in the first on singles by Saito, Toda, and Sumiya and a costly two-out error. Three more came in the second, as Shiba led off with a triple. With two out, Saito walked, Toda doubled home two, Nishimura reached on an error Sumiya singled, FHWA came back with one when Ihab Elayan and Bassam Bibi led off with walks, Bob Mitchell singled to load the bases, and Dave Wetzel hit a sacrifice fly.

Walked

All-Japan scored two in the fourth on Toda's two-run homer. In the fifth Lubin Quinones walked, Jerry Cloud singled and with two out, coach Monte Symons had an RBI single. The Bazookas batted around in the sixth. Aoki reached on an error, Saito walked, Toda doubled home one, Nishimura singled home two, and Sumiya singled. With one out, Sone reached on an error, Nakano hit a sacrifice fly, and Shiba was safe on an error. All-Japan's last two in the seventh came when Noguichi singled, Toda singled and Sumiya tripled home two.

The Falcons scored two in the sixth as Bibi led off with a double, Wetzel doubled to deep left center and Curt Jorgensen hit an RBI single. In the seventh, Doug Bennett reached on an error, Symons and Elayan walked to fill the bases, and Mitchell singled home FHWA's last run.

In one of the key games of the season, the Eagles defeated KU for the second time this season. In an excellent pitcher's battle, Al Rodier won his eighth straight game and Clarence Jabe lost his first. The Eagles outlast KU 10-6, getting all their runs and half their hits in the second inning.

KU scored first, as Jassim Yahia drew an opening walk, Vic Mason doubled to right and Karl Anderson singled home one. With men on first and third and one out, KU failed to score again. The Eagles' big inning came on lead-off singles from James Alderman, Hal Leighton, Jim Shelstad and Rodier. Nate Howell reached on a fielder's choice and Gerre Andre, in what turned out to be the key hit of the game, doubled down the rightfield line.

KU came back with two in the fourth as Ed Smith led off with a single up the middle and slugger Anderson hit another tremendous home run over the leftfield fence for the final two runs of the game. KU's only two other hits were singles by Anderson in the sixth and Doug Clark in the seventh. The Eagles' other hits, all singles, came from Dan Proctor in the first, Leighton in the third, Andre in the fourth, and Jeff Jugar and Alderman in the fifth. Rodier again showed excellent control, walking only two and getting KU batters continuously to hit his inside pitches. Leftfielder Skip Stombaugh and rover Proctor caught nine fly balls, and shortstop Shelstad handled five grounders and started a key seventh-inning double play. The Eagles had only one error in the game, KU only two.

Next Friday's games complete the fall 1989 season. The Eagles will play a doubleheader against All-Japan and against Kay in a make-up game.

Standings									
	W	L	RF	RA		W	L	RF	RA
Eagles	8	0	113	49	Kay	4	4	133	63
KU	7	2	128	46	FHWA	6	3	63	153
UAS	5	4	78	92	All-Japan	1	8	59	171

Royals sign Davis for \$13 million

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Dec 12, (Reuters) The Kansas City Royals signed free agent relief pitcher Mark Davis to a four-year contract yesterday that once again raised the salary ceiling in Major League baseball.

Sources said Davis, the National League Cy Young award winner who led the Majors in saves last season with 44, will receive \$13 million — an average of \$3.25 million per year.

It is the fourth time that baseball's salary record has been broken in the past month.

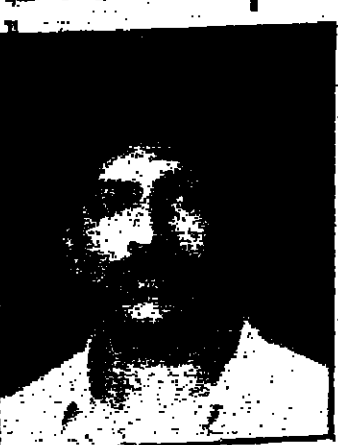
Last year with the San Diego Padres, Davis was successful on 44 of 48 save opportunities and posted a 4-1 record with an earned run average of 1.85. He allowed just 66 hits in 92 innings of work, striking out 92 and walking 31.

The signing of Davis by Kansas City, who also have last year's American League Cy Young winner, Bret Saberhagen, on their pitching staff, intensifies the pressure on World Series champions Oakland Athletics in the American League West.

The Royals had already added free agent Storm Davis, who won 19 games for Oakland last season, to their staff.

The California Angels, another Western Division contender, spent \$16 million to sign left-handed starter Mark Langston to a five-year contract.

Siddique brush aside CCK



Aftab: scored 71

SIDDIQUE Cricket Club thrashed CCK by seven wickets in a Shabbir Memorial Trophy match at the EPI ground on Friday.

Batting first, CCK scored 133 runs for the loss of five wickets in the 26 allotted overs. Burhan scored 52 runs while Riaz and Zabeer made 21 each against some very accurate bowling.

For Siddique, Amjad Amin took two wickets while Asif and Amjad Javed got one each. Mukesh and Malik bowled to a very accurate line and length but were unable to get a wicket. In reply, Siddique opened

their innings through Arif and Aftab and both of them took the score to 14 before the former was out. Amjad also went back to the pavilion after being bowled while playing a lazy shot. He scored 29.

Aftab, however, kept hitting all the bowlers to all parts of the ground and had taken his team quite near to the victory target before he lost his wicket.

Aftab hit five fours in his 71 while Shahid Butt remained undefeated on 11 as Siddique went past the victory target for the loss of three wickets.



555

Stands out for taste

Government Warning: Smoking is a major cause of cancer and diseases of the lungs, heart and arteries.

SPORTS

India in driving seat for first time in series

SIALKOT, Pakistan, Dec 12, (Reuters): India, having held Pakistan to a draw in the first three cricket Tests, are in the driving seat for the first time in the series with two days of the fourth and final match left.

Pakistan resume their first innings tomorrow, following today's rest day, 143 behind India with five wickets in

hand, including that of captain Imran Khan.

Imran, who is 21 not out and represents a major stumbling block to the touring team, conceded that India were holding all the cards and for the first time in the high-scoring series they were in control of the situation.

"It has become an absorbing test. We

gave away too many runs because of the inexperience of our bowlers to bowl on the green-top wicket," he told reporters. But Imran said he thought India might not have enough time to force a win after nearly 230 minutes were lost on the first three days because of bad weather and interruptions caused by the crowd throwing fruit at Indian fielders.

Indian captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth said he was delighted with the performance of his side.

"We're very happy to be in this position and the team owes everything to the bowlers who bowled beautifully," he said.

Srikkanth praised Vivek Razdan, the 20-year-old seamer from Delhi who has

taken three for 68 in only his second Test.

He said both Kapil Dev and fellow pacer Manoj Prabhakar were unlucky not to get more than one wicket each but had contained the batsmen with their accuracy. Kapil conceding only 29 runs in his 24 overs.

Scores: India 324, Pakistan 181 for five.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Cavaliers win

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec 12, (AP): Craig Ehlo made two 3-point shots in the final 4.3 seconds of overtime, including the game-winning shot as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Utah Jazz 113-110.

Four killed

KUMASI, Ghana, Dec 12, (AP): Four people were killed when soccer fans rushed to get away from tear gas police fired at gangs trying to rob a stadium cashier, police said today.

Postal competition

LONDON, Dec 12, (Reuters): A postal competition between English and South African archers dating back 30 years has been shot down by the Commonwealth Games council because it contravenes the international sports boycott of the republic.

Girardelli hurt

SESTRIERE, Italy, Dec 12, (AP): Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, the defending World Cup overall ski champion, was injured today in a spectacular fall during a Super-Giant Slalom race.

Appearance fees

MILAN, Italy, Dec 12, (AP): Organisers of the Feb 5-11 Milan indoor tennis tournament said yesterday they will offer about \$600,000 in appearance fees on top of the \$600,000 in prize money.

Cup squad

SYDNEY, Australia, Dec 12, (AP): Injury-plagued duo Pat Cash and Darren Cahill today were named to a seven-man Australian tennis squad to prepare for the first round Davis Cup match against France in Perth from Feb 2-4.

AC Milan go straight to training

TOKYO, Dec 12, (Reuters): European champions AC Milan arrived in Tokyo today for Sunday's World Cup Soccer Championship — and went straight to a training session before even booking into their hotel.

The Italians, seeking their third international club title of the year following their Champions' Cup win in May and their Super Cup victory over Cup Winners' Cup holders Barcelona last week, trained for an hour following their 12-hour flight.

Their opponents in Sunday's match, South American champions Medellin of Colombia, were scheduled to arrive tomorrow after an overnight stop in Los Angeles.

Milan, world cup champions in 1969 when they beat Independiente of Argentina, were in confident mood despite the absence of Dutch international Ruud Gullit, who has played only one match since April because of a nagging knee injury.

He recently had a third operation and is not expected to be fit until the new year. Trainer Arrigo Sacchi told a packed press conference at Narita airport that his side had come to play an entertaining game of football. "If we can add the Cup to that, which we want with all our hearts, so much the better."

"But we know national medallion are difficult opponents, because they include many of the Colombian national side," he said.

He emphasised, however, that his own 18-strong squad was on top form, especially following the return from injury of captain Franco Baresi and midfielder Carlo Ancelotti.

Of Gullit's loss, Sacchi said: "(Marco) Van Basten, Baresi, (Frank) Rijkaard, (Roberto) Donadoni and the others know they must give something extra to compensate for his absence."

The team will be announced on the eve of the match, Sacchi said.

BRIDGE

RESULTS of the Dunhill Bridge Tournament (14th ed) held at the Messiah Beach Hotel on Monday:

N 5
1. Dr. Adel & Sherrin
2. Dr & Mrs Oskay
3. Krishnaswamy & Alen

E W
1. Ibrahim Haq & Nisar
2. Dreveler & Carsten
3. Duanj & Sultan Ali

Taylor hits ton to set record

Sri Lanka-Australia Test drawn



Taylor sweeps a ball from Aravinda de Silva for four runs. (Reuters wirephoto)

BRISBANE, Australia, Dec 12, (Reuters): Sri Lanka achieved an honourable draw against their hosts today but not before Australian opener Mark Taylor set a record by scoring 164 on the final day of the first Test.

Australia, who scored 367 in their first innings, reached 375 for six in their second innings at close of play, a lead of 324 runs. Sri Lanka had lost their previous two Tests against Australia by an innings.

Taylor became the first player to score 1,000 Test runs in his first year in Test cricket on the way to his third Test century. He made his debut for Australia in the fourth Test against West Indies in January.

The left-hander, who hit 839 runs in the Ashes series against England, plundered 17 fours and two sixes off a depleted Sri Lanka attack in his 10th Test.

Ravi Ratnayake did not bowl in the second innings because of a side injury while his fellow strike bowler Graeme Labrooy managed just 11 overs today before injury sidelined him.

Taylor, 36 overnight, put on 149 runs for the fourth wicket with Steve Waugh who was happy to take a back seat as his normally cautious partner thrashed the bowling around the ground.

Taylor was lucky to survive

shortly after Australia resumed at 94 for one. With one run added to the overnight score Taylor came down the wicket to leg-spinner Asoka de Silva and was beaten. But wicketkeeper Gani Wickremasinghe missed the stumping.

He was out shortly after tea lbw to Champaka Ramanayake after the bowler had complained about the ball to the umpires.

Taylor was asked if he was happy with his shape. He said he was seeing it clearly but proceeded to miss the next ball to bring his 425-minute innings to a close.

Despite Taylor missing out on a double century Australian captain Allan Border ignored the chance to declare and give his much-criticised all-pace attack a chance to redeem themselves.

Immediately after the game Australian selectors announced leg-spinner Peter Sleep would be included in the squad for the second Test, starting on Friday in Hobart.

Geoff Lawson, who only took one wicket against Sri Lanka, has been dropped after appearing in all six Tests in England.

Australia's bowling has looked pedestrian in two draws this season and has missed the variety provided by leg-spinner Trevor Hohns, who retired after the 4-0 thrashing of England.

Eight runs after Taylor's dismissal, with the score on 324 for four, Waugh was bowled for 57 by Asanka Gurusinghe who dismissed Carl Rackemann, elevated from his normal position as number 11, in the same fashion the very next ball.

Ian Healy and Merv Hughes hit 51 runs, including a massive six by Hughes into a car park, before stumps were drawn 30 minutes early.

Scoreboard

AUSTRALIA first innings 367
SRI LANKA first innings 418
**AUSTRALIA second innings (over-
night 94 for one wicket)**
M Taylor lbw b Ramanayake 164
D. Boon lbw b Ramanayake 26
T. Moody c A Ranatunga b Asoka de Silva 30
D. Jones c Ramanayake b Aravinda de Silva 23
S. Waugh b Gurusinghe 57
I. Healy not out 26
C. Rackemann b Gurusinghe 0
M. Hughes not out 23
Extras (b-5 lb-4 nb-17) 26
Total (for six wickets) 375
Fall of wickets: 1-60 (2-124 3-167 4-316 5-324 6-324)
Did not bat: A. Border, G. Lawson, T. Alderman.
Bowling: Labrooy 24-4-69-0 (6nb), Ramanayake 28-3-81-2 (5nb), Asoka de Silva 39-8-112-1, Aravinda de Silva 15-2-45-1 (2nb), Gurusinghe 10-3-31-2, Ranatunga 6-0-25-0, Mahura 1-0-5-0.
Result: Draw.
Second Test — December 16-20, Hobart.

DTSB officials set to resign

EAST BERLIN, Dec 12, (Reuters): The entire leadership of East Germany's powerful DTSS sports federation were to resign this evening because of grassroots dissatisfaction at the slow pace of reform in sport, a federation spokesman said.

He told Reuters the DTSS president, Klaus Eichler, and his five-man secretariat would quit at a crucial meeting this evening at the Kienbaum training camp east of Berlin where they were confirmed in office or appointed just 12 days ago.

One East German newspaper said many DTSS members believed the federation's radical reform plan was too vague and would not be implemented quickly enough.

Real chairman rebukes Toshack

REAL MADRID'S British coach John Toshack has been rebuked by club chairman Ramon Mendoza as the Spanish soccer giants still seek to come to terms with another European Cup failure.

The influential El Pais daily said Mendoza had rebuked Toshack for his stormy relationship with players, for failing in the club's main objective of taking the European Cup, and even for his lack of interest in improving his Spanish.

The newspaper also said Mendoza criticised Toshack on Monday for his tactless treatment of the press, and the Briton came away from their meeting promising to improve his relationship with the media.

These sharp reminders to Toshack of Real's expectations came in the wake of the club's intense disappointment at being knocked out of the European Cup by holders AC Milan in the second round last month.

Real place success in the premier European club competition above all else, and Toshack, in his first season with the club, will be aware he may not get a second chance. El Pais claimed Mendoza was already seeking his replacement.

The talking point surrounding Real's city rival's

Atletico Madrid, has been coach Javier Clemente's decision suddenly to drop established goalkeeper Abel Resino last weekend from the team who won 3-2 against Tenerife.

Over the last two seasons, Abel has missed only two games out of 53, and his sudden replacement by deputy keeper Agustin Elduayen surprised even the team.

"I don't have to explain to anyone my motives for choosing one or another line-up," said Clemente. "I thought it was convenient to give Elduayen an opening in the team."

Fatigue may hinder Napoli's attempt to win the Italian First Division title, a factor underlined by Andrea Carnevale following his late equaliser for the leaders against Bari on Sunday.

"We're all exhausted and injury-prone, no-one can recharge their physical and mental batteries every three days recently we haven't had a moment's rest," said Carnevale.

Napoli captain Diego Maradona still has not fully recovered from nagging back trouble and the mainstay of the defence, French-born libero Alessandro Renica, is fighting to regain match fitness after being absent since mid-September.

Erwin Koeman, the KV Mechelen midfielder player, is a transfer target for Dutch League champions PSV Eindhoven, according to Dutch press reports.

Koeman is a regular in the Dutch national side, filling a defensive role on the left-hand side of midfield.

Meanwhile Feyenoord, who last week appointed Swede Gunde Bengtsson to their coaching staff, have pledged to spend 2.5 million guilders (\$1.25 million) in an attempt to make themselves a power in European soccer again within the next 18 months.

Two possible Feyenoord targets are thought to be PSV defender Michel Boersma and John Veldman, both of whom are unable to establish regular places in the team.

In West Germany, Olaf Thon's joy at ending a lengthy injury lay-off and returning for Bayern Munich was short-lived.

Thon had played only one match after a nine-week absence with a ligament injury when he tore a ligament again before last Saturday's League game. Consequently, he will probably be out of the side for another nine weeks.

Spain to try newcomers against Swiss

England aim to end goal famine against Yugoslavs

LONDON, Dec 12, (Reuters): England's main concern in their World Cup warm-up against Yugoslavia tomorrow will be to find a scoring touch that dried up during the long, hot summer.

Manager Bobby Robson, already feeling the heat of a tough World Cup group in Sardinia next year, has watched his side qualify for the Italy finals unbeaten but finish their three matches this season 0-0.

In fielding exciting new striker Steve Bull, Robson will be hoping to find an answer to the goal famine.

Gary Lineker, topscorer in the 1986 World Cup finals, has struggled to find the net consistently for Tottenham this season.

Bull, who plays for Second Division Wolverhampton, scored on his England debut as a substitute against Scotland last May and missed last month's 0-0 draw with Italy only because of suspension.

Robson, who has shown a marked reluctance to experiment during his seven-year tenure, has made four changes to the team which played Italy.

Queen's Park Rangers' defender Paul Parker and the Arsenal midfielder pair Michael Thomas and David Rocastle join Bull in replacing Gary Stevens, Steve McMahon, Peter Beardsley and the injured John Barnes.

England's World Cup group includes European champions the Netherlands and Ireland who beat England in the 1988

European Championship finals. Yugoslavia, also unbeaten in their qualifying series, have a slightly easier World Cup group with West Germany, Colombia and the United Arab Emirates.

Coach Ivica Osim will be without some foreign-based stalwarts and his bleeding of promising newcomers means risking an end to Yugoslavia's unbeaten run that was extended with a 0-0 draw in a friendly in Brazil last month.

Mehmed Bazdarevic, serving a one-year Fifa suspension, is out of the reckoning, while sweeper Srecko Katanec of Italy's Sampdoria is injured and Anderlecht's Milan Jankovic unavailable.

"The fine tuning is always the most difficult part of the (World Cup) preparation," coach Ivica Osim said. "Playing with England could help us to establish why we are still playing a bit slowly and a bit too routinely."

The main threat to England's defence is expected to come from Dragan Stokjovic, Yugoslavia's playmaker who last week signed for French champions Olympique Marseille.

Osim, who would like to see Yugoslavia avenge a 4-1 defeat by England in their last meeting in Belgrade two years ago, added: "One of the big tasks before the World Cup finals next year is to find a replacement for Bazdarevic, who was organising our defence and connecting it with the attack."



Barnes: to miss match due to injury

Teams:
England — Peter Shilton, Paul Parker, Des Walker, Terry Butcher, Stuart Pearce, Michael

Thomas, Bryan Robson, David Rocastle, Gary Lineker, Steve Bull, Chris Waddle.
Yugoslavia (probable) —

Tomislav Ivkovic, Predrag Spasic, Faruk Hadzibegic, Davor Jozic, Andrej Panadic, Slobodan Marovic, Dragoljub Brnovic, Safet Susic, Dragan Stokjovic, Dejan Savicevic, Radmilo Mihajlovic.

Nearly half the players on the pitch will be newcomers when Spain and Switzerland meet in a soccer friendly in the Canary Islands tomorrow.

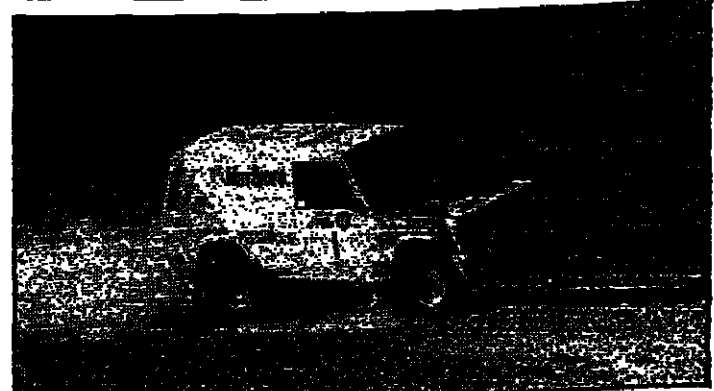
Spain begin by limbering up for the World Cup by fielding two new faces and the Swiss side will include seven after injuries kept midfielder Martin Andermatt, strikers Beat Sutter and Stephan Chapuisat and reserve keeper Stefan Huber at home.

Switzerland are unlikely to provide any major headaches for the Spanish but coach Luis Suarez, worried about having to begin their World Cup campaign in June with a match against Uruguay, says his team needs all the warm-up friendlies they can get.

"You cannot compare Switzerland and Uruguay, but we are going to try a few things out," said Suarez.

He warned that Switzerland, captained by veteran Heinz Hermann in his 98th international, had to be taken seriously since former West German international and Real Madrid player Uli Stielike took over their coaching.

Suarez has decided to give Oviedo defender Luis Manuel and Valladolid midfielder



Abbas Al Mosawi in action in this year's rally.

Desert Challenge details announced

JEDDAH: The 1990 BP 2000 Trophy Marlboro Desert Challenge four-wheel-drive series will be the biggest yet with an increased calendar to six rallies throughout the Middle East. This will allow more spectators to see the exciting four-wheel-drive series for themselves, as well as giving a new and increasing number of drivers a chance to compete and win in rallying.

The details of the series were announced yesterday at a press conference at the annual Jeddah Motor Show in Saudi Arabia. The programme of rallies in the 1990 Marlboro Desert Challenge series is as follows:

BP 2000 Trophy UAE — January 18/19
BP 2000 Trophy Oman — March 22/23
BP 2000 Trophy Jordan — July 19/20
BP 2000 Trophy Kuwait — September 27/28
BP 2000 Trophy Qatar — October 11/12
BP 2000 Trophy Bahrain — November 8/9
In order that all competitors

have a fair chance in the standard and modified rally classifications, the best five results will count championship points. As with the 1989 series, the series is broken into separate classifications, allowing for powerful rally specified cars, along with showroom standard 4x4 vehicles.

In 1989 the Marlboro Desert Challenge was won for the second consecutive season by Qatar's Abbas Al Mosawi, who drove for Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, in a long-wheel-base Pajero. Winner of the standard classification was Mohammed Al Malki from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia — driving a privately entered V6 Mitsubishi Pajero.

Of significance in 1989 was the emergence in the Gulf wide off road championship, of a number of exciting new talents to the Gulf rallying scene. The most notable of these was the young Nasser Al Atyia from Qatar. He finished third in Marlboro Desert Challenge in a Nissan Patrol, and at only 19-years of age looks like a serious prospect for future Middle East rally events.

Flying Arrows win

FLYING ARROWS reached the finals of the Champions Trophy hockey tournament with a 3-1 victory over Kuwait Independent (Black) at the Ahmadli grounds earlier this week.

Showing their intentions right from the start of the game, Independents went ahead when they scored through Peter off the first chance that came their way.

This early goal spurred Flying Arrows into action but they could not get the equaliser and were still 1-0 down at the interval.

After the interval, Flying Arrows went all out for the equaliser with Sunil and Tony excelling in the midfield. Their efforts were rewarded soon, James received a pass from Joel, dribbled past two Independent defenders and gave the rival goalkeeper no chance to effect a save.

After getting the equaliser, Flying started dominating the game. They soon increased the margin through Martin. The third goal of the match, again scored by Martin, was the best of the whole match.

Meanwhile Al Hilal beat Unity 1-0 to reach the semifinals of the Sharjah Trophy.

In a match in which the whole game was restricted to the midfield, Mubasher of Al Hilal stood out in the defence, foiling a number of attacks launched by Unity's Amjad and Liatat.

Unity got a chance to take the lead but Khalid shot wide. The only goal of the match was scored by Nasser.

On Friday, Kuwait Independent (Black) meet Al Hilal in an Al Mulla Trophy match at 2.00 pm, Kuwait Independent (Gold) meet Unity in the Frankie Memorial tournament at 3.00 pm and Kuwait Cosmos take on Starworld in the Al Mulla Trophy also at 2.00 pm.

Salud defeats Estrada for junior title

LOS ANGELES, Dec 12, (Reuters): American Jesus Salud took the World Boxing Association junior featherweight title from Mexico's Juan Jose Estrada yesterday after the referee disqualified Estrada in the ninth round for low blows.

Estrada was penalised in the sixth round and warned again in the seventh for low blows. In the ninth round, he crouched low and lurched forward while throwing an uppercut at Salud.

Salud was also moving in and caught the punch well below the belt. He fell to the canvas and curled up on his side as referee Larry Rozadilla waved the fight to an end 48 seconds in to the round and declared Salud the winner.

Salud was well ahead on the judges' scorecards when the fight was halted. The scoring was 78-72, 80-71, 79-71 in the challenger's favour by the end of the eighth round.

Salud raised his record to 32 wins and three defeats. Estrada dropped to 36-8.

"The key to this fight was the counter-punching," Salud said. "He telegraphed his punches. I could see them coming."

Estrada said the low blows were unintentional. "Tonight was a bad night," he said through an interpreter.

Salud controlled the bout from the end of the second round when he stunned Estrada with a jarring left hook to the head. The American, who knocked Estrada down in the sixth, scored repeatedly with lefts and rights to the head against Estrada who was aggressive, but ineffective, to the end.

ARAB @ TIMES

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Departments: KD 75. (Air mail
charges extra for overseas
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